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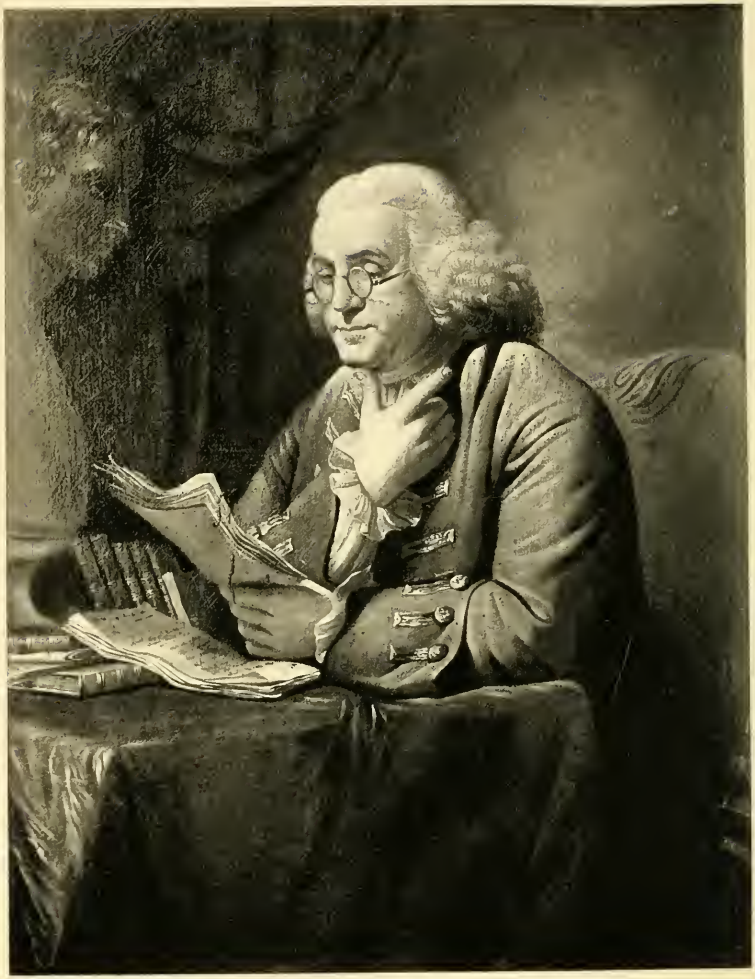

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Benjamin Franklin

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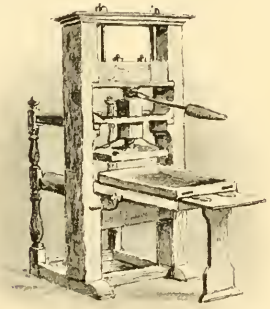
Twelve Volumes



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"Strange that Ulysses does a thousand things so well."—Iliad, B. 11, 335

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CORRESPONDENCE

AND

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

CORRESPONDENCE

AND

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

DCCLXVI

TO RICHARD OLIVER, ESQ.

PASSY, 14 March, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—It will always be a pleasure to me to do what may be agreeable to you. Inclosed is the passport you desire. I wish you and your friends a prosperous voyage, being ever with the sincerest esteem, dear sir, etc, B. FRANKLIN.

To All Captains and Commanders of Vessels of War, Privateers, and Letters of Marque Belonging to the United States of America.

GENTLEMEN:—I do hereby certify to you that I have long and intimately known the bearer, Richard Oliver, Esq., member of Parliament, and late Alderman of London, and have ever found him a sincere and hearty friend to the cause of liberty and of

America, of which he has given many substantial proofs on various occasions. Therefore, if by the chance of war he should in his voyage from England to the West Indies happen to fall into your hands, I recommend him warmly, with the friends that may accompany him, to your best civilities, requesting that you would afford your generous protection to their persons, and favor them with their liberty when a suitable opportunity shall offer. In this I am sure your conduct will be approved by the Congress and your employers, and you will much oblige (if that be any motive), gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

At Passy, near Paris, this 14th day of March, 1779.

DCCLXVII

TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Passy, 16 March, 1779.

Dear Jonathan:—Agreeable to your desire, I have requested the American gentlemen residing at Nantes to examine your accounts. I have added Mr. Schweighauser, he having been appointed by my former colleagues to manage our affairs there, and may be supposed interested particularly to do justice to the Congress. And the others, I imagine, can have no interest in favoring you, as perhaps you may stand in their way respecting business. Inclosed you have copies of my letter to the gentlemen, and of another on the same business to Mr. Lee. If I

had known of his going to Nantes I should have desired him to state his objections to the accounts there, but I did not hear of his being there till a day or two before his return. I have yet no answer from him.

I showed your letter of February 20th, relating to Mr. Simeon Deane's goods, to Mr. Adams, who thought the proposition reasonable. I send by this opportunity an order to Mr. Schweighauser to deliver to you the case which remains; and if you will send me the original invoice and the form of the bills you propose, I shall sign and return them,—if no objection arises on signing them that does not at present occur to me.

I suppose you settled the affair yourself with Mercier's agent, as he took the papers from me, saying that he was going to Nantes. This was before I received yours of February 23d, relating to that business.

I received the bond for Collas' commission.

The following bills, drawn before the 12th of December in favor of William Denine, were presented and accepted on the 19th of February last, viz.: dollars 600, 12, 600, 30, 120, 12, 120,—in all 1494 dollars. These may possibly be a part of those you mention. I shall order payment to be stopped till I have examined the indorsements, though I am not sure that I can well refuse payment after having accepted them. We shall strictly examine such drafts in favor of Denine as may appear hereafter, till you let us know further.

I return Dr. Cooper's letter, with thanks to you for communicating it. I am much obliged to that good man for his kind expressions of regard to me.

The tobacco which came in the *Bergère*, and all the tobacco which comes to us from America, is to be delivered directly out of the ships to the agents of the farmers-general, in the ports where it arrives. I had sent orders accordingly before the receipt of your notice of her arrival.

I am ashamed of the orders of my countrymen for so much tea, when necessaries are wanting for clothing and defending!

I have been long ill and unfit to write or think of writing, which occasioned my omitting to answer before your several letters since the 16th of February. I omitted, also, answering a kind letter from Mr. Ridley, who, I suppose, is now gone. If not, present my respects to him and best wishes of a prosperous voyage and happy sight of his friends. I am getting better and hope our correspondence will now be more regular.

I am ever your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXVIII

TO M. JOSHUA JOHNSON

Passy, 17 March, 1779.

Sir:—I received the honor of yours of the 6th inst. I took the first opportunity of speaking to M. D'Arlincourt, *fils*, one of the farmers-general in whose department you reside, on the subject of your furniture, who told me very politely that, as it was a matter in which I interested myself, he would order

the duties, if they had been received, to be returned. By our treaty we are only entitled to such advantage respecting duties as is enjoyed by the most favored nations. I have not yet been able to obtain a certain knowledge of the duties paid by other nations in France, and I am told it is not easy to obtain, as they are very different in the different provinces, and there is not, as in England, a printed book of them. So, not being enough informed at present to claim your exemption as a right, I was obliged to accept it as a favor. But these sort of favors I shall find a difficulty in asking hereafter, for, the States being under great obligations to the farmers-general, who lent us money in our distress, and having often occasion to ask aids from this government, one can hardly, with any grace, demand at the same time in favor of particulars an exemption from paying their share of the duties whence only the ability of affording such aids can arise.

I have ordered the *Alliance* to be got ready as soon as possible. The execution depends on Mr. Schweighauser and the captain. I thank you for your information relating to the *Bergère*. Orders had before been given relating to her cargo.

With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—If you can by any means obtain an account of the duties to be paid by different nations in your port, I shall be obliged to you for it, and will pay any expense necessary for copying, etc.

DCCLXIX

TO MONTAUDOIN

Passy, 17 March, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor of the 4th inst. by M. David with much pleasure, as it informed me of the welfare of friends I love, and who are indeed beloved by everybody. I thank you for your kind congratulations, and for the prayers you use in my behalf. Though the form is heathen, there is a good Christian spirit in it, and I feel myself very well disposed to be content with this world, which I have found hitherto a tolerably good one, and to wait for heaven (which will not be the worse for keeping) as long as God pleases. I don't complain much, even of the gout, which has harassed me ever since the arrival of the commission you so politely mention. There seems, however, some incongruity in a plenipotentiary who can neither stand nor go.

With the sincerest esteem, respect, and affection, I am, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCLXX

TO M. DUMAS [1]

Passy, 18 March, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received duly yours of the 3d instant. My indisposition seems to be wearing off, and I hope will permit me to go abroad in a few days.

[1] Agent of the colonies in Holland.

M. Neufville's first propositions were so much out of the way that I could not accept them. He required a fifth part of the loan to be sent over to him annually during the first five years in the produce of America for sale, and the money to remain in his hands as a fund for paying off the debt in the last five years. By this means he would have had the use of our money while we were paying interest for it. He dropped this demand on my objecting to it, and undertook to procure a subscription on reasonable terms. I wish him success; but as the English give at present higher interest than I am permitted to offer, I have little dependence on that subscription. Let me know what you hear of it from time to time.

Mr. Adams is gone to Nantes to take his passage for America in one of our frigates. Mr. A. Lee has retired from Chaillot to Paris, and his brother has come on a visit from Frankfort. He talks of a Congress to be held in Germany, and seems to want me to advise his attendance there incognito. I know nothing of it, and, therefore, can give no advice about it. He talks of 20,000 men at liberty by the German peace to be hired by the English against us, and would be employed in preventing it. What do you think or learn of these circumstances?

The present situation of affairs in your country is interesting. Unacquainted as I am with your parties and interests, I find it difficult to perceive how they will terminate. [*Incomplete.*]

DCCLXXI

TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Passy, 19 March, 1779.

Dear Nephew:—In your receipts for M. Monthieu's copper there is mention made of *copper ore*. Explain this to me; for as we bought no copper ore of him, and as it is not so valuable as copper, it ought not to be given us instead of copper.

Mr. Lee has yet sent me no answer to mine relating to your accounts. Let me know whether the reference is accepted by the referees and whether it goes on. I send you three original papers that may be of use to you, as they show Mr. Lee's great skill in accounts, and ability in objecting to them. The *first* is a proposition M. Monthieu made to obtain a contract. The *second* is the contract actually . . . made differing from the proposition. The *third* is Mr. Lee's *Report*, wherein he took M. Monthieu's proposition of a contract to be an *account of charge* for the execution of it; and comparing it with the contract, he charges all the difference he finds as so many errors in M. Monthieu's account. For instance, M. Monthieu proposed to make 10,000 suits; we agreed with him only for 6,000. Here Mr. Lee finds an overcharge of 4,000 suits. M. Monthieu proposed that we should give him thirty-eight livres per suit; we agreed for thirty-seven. Here Mr. Lee finds an over-charge of 10,000 livres, and so of the rest; when in fact M. Monthieu, in his real account, had charged exactly according to the agreement. You must take

good care of these papers, say nothing how you came by them, and return them to me safely.

I send you inclosed the proposals of a tin-plate manufacturer, which may some time or other be of use to you.

I shall dispose of your letter to Mr. Lee as you desire. I would advise you avoiding the publication you mention.

Explain to me what is meant in your postscript by *the zeal of the best of them*, etc.

I send an order this day to suspend the action against M. Peltier. But surely he acted very irregularly to sell a cargo consigned to us, without our order, and give the produce to another. We ourselves never had any dealings with M. Beaumarchais, and he has never produced any account to us, but says the States owe him a great deal of money. Upon his word only we gave him up the cargo of the *Amphitrite;* he promised then to give us an account, but has never done it; and now, by means of M. Peltier, he has seized another cargo. I imagine there is no doubt but M. Peltier would be obliged to pay us the money if the action were continued. And methinks every man who makes a demand ought to deliver an account. For my own part, I imagine our country has been really much obliged to M. Beaumarchais; and it is probable that Mr. Deane concerted with him several large operations for which he is not yet paid. They were before my arrival, and therefore I was not privy to them. Had I been alone when the action was commenced, perhaps I should have thought of some milder proceeding, making allowance for M.

Beaumarchais' not being bred a merchant. But I think you cannot well justify M. Peltier.

I am ever your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 21 March, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received duly yours of the 2d instant. I am sorry you have had so much trouble in the affair of the prisoners. You have been deceived as well as I. No cartel ship has yet appeared; and it is now evident that the delays have been of design, to give more opportunity of seducing the men by promises and hardships to seek their liberty in engaging against their country; for we learn from those who have escaped, that there are persons continually employed in cajoling and menacing them; representing to them that we neglect them; that your government is willing to exchange them; and that it is our fault it is not done; that all the news from America is bad on their side; we shall be conquered and they will be hanged, if they do not accept the gracious offer of being pardoned, on condition of serving the king, etc. A great part of your prisoners have been kept these six months on board a ship in Brest road, ready to be delivered; where I am afraid they were not so comfortably accommodated as they might have been in French prisons. They are now ordered

on shore. Dr. Bancroft has received your letter here. He did not go to Calais.[1]

Knowing how earnestly and constantly you wish for peace, I cannot end a letter to you without dropping a word on that subject, to mark that my wishes are still in unison with yours. After the barbarities your nation has exercised against us, I am almost ashamed to own that I feel sometimes for her misfortunes and her insanities. Your veins are open, and your best blood continually running. You have now got a little army into Georgia, and are triumphing in that success. Do you expect ever to see that army again? I know not what General Lincoln or General Thompson may be able to effect against them; but, if they stay through the summer in that climate, there is a certain *General Fever* that I apprehend will give a good account of most of them. Perhaps you comfort yourselves that our loss of blood is as great as yours. But, as physicians say, there is a great difference in the facility of repairing that loss between an old body and a young one. America adds to her numbers annually one hundred and fifty thousand souls. She, therefore, grows faster than you can diminish her, and will outgrow all the mischief you can do her. Have you the same prospects? But it is unnecessary for me to represent to you, or you to me, the mischiefs that each nation is subjected to by the war; we all see clear enough the nonsense of continuing it; the difficulty is, where

[1] It had been intended that Dr. Bancroft should proceed to England, with a power from Dr. Franklin to negotiate an exchange of prisoners; but some difficulty having arisen, of which Mr. Hartley's letter contained an intimation, that journey did not take place.—W. T. F.

to find sense enough to put an end to it. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXIII

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Passy, 22 March, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I admire much the activity of your genius and the strong desire you have of being continually employed against our common enemy.

It is certain that the coasts of England and Scotland are extremely open and defenceless; there are also many rich towns near the sea, which four or five thousand men, landing unexpectedly, might easily surprise and destroy, or exact from them a heavy contribution, taking a part in ready money and hostages for the rest. I should suppose, for example, that two millions sterling, or forty-eight millions of livres, might be demanded of Bristol for the town and shipping; twelve millions of livres from Bath; forth-eight millions from Liverpool; six millions from Lancaster; and twelve millions from Whitehaven. On the east side there are the towns of New Castle, Scarborough, Lynn, and Yarmouth, from which very considerable sums might be exacted. And if among the troops there were a few horsemen to make sudden incursions at some little distance from the coast, it would spread terror to much greater distances, and the whole would occasion movements and marches of troops that must put the

enemy to a prodigious expense and harass them exceedingly. Their militia will probably soon be drawn from the different counties to one or two places of encampment, so that little or no opposition can be made to such a force as is above mentioned in the places where they may land. But the practicability of such an operation, and the means of facilitating and executing it, military people can best judge of. I have not enough of knowledge in such matters to presume upon advising it, and I am so troublesome to the ministers on other accounts, that I could hardly venture to solicit it if I were ever so confident of its success. Much will depend on the prudent and brave sea commander, who knows the coasts, and on a leader of the troops who has the affair at heart, who is naturally active and quick in his enterprises, of a disposition proper to conciliate the good-will and affection of both the corps, and by that means to prevent or obviate such misunderstandings as are apt to arise between them, and which are often pernicious to joint expeditions.

On the whole, it may be encouraging to reflect on the many instances of history which prove that in war, attempts thought to be impossible, do often, for that very reason become possible and practicable because nobody expects them and no precautions are taken to guard against them. And those are the kind of undertakings of which the success affords the most glory to the ministers who plan and to the officers who execute them.

With the sincerest esteem and affection, I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCLXXIV

TO A. LEE

PASSY, 27 March, 1779.

SIR:—I have not hitherto undertaken to justify Mr. Williams' accounts, nor to censure your conduct in not passing them. To prevent any suspicion of partiality towards him as my nephew, I avoided having any thing to do with the examination of them; but left it entirely to you and Mr. Adams. After that examination Mr. Adams drew up and sent me in for signing the order you mention. I considered the expressions in it as only serving to show that the accounts were not finally settled; and I considered Mr. Adams' drawing up and sending me the order as a proof that, in his judgment, who had with you examined the accounts, the bills drawn on M. Grand ought to be paid. I therefore signed it. I was not, as you suppose, convinced "*that the accounts as they stood could not be passed*"; for, having never examined them, I could form no such opinion of them. It was not till lately that, being pressed by M. Monthieu for a settlement of his accounts and finding that they had a reference to Mr. Williams, I got those from Mr. Adams. They were put up in a paper case which covered the note you had made upon them, and that case was fastened with wax. This prevented the notes being before seen either by myself or by Mr. Adams, among whose papers you had left those accounts. He was as much surprised at seeing it as I was, and as much dissatisfied with another you had made in the body of the accounts, which, taken with

the first, imports that, notwithstanding it appeared from Mr. Williams' own account that he has now and has long had in his hands upwards of an hundred thousand livres belonging to the public, that have not been applied to the public use, "B. Franklin and John Adams, Esqrs., had given an order on the public banker for the payment of all Mr. Williams' demands."

This being a severe reflection upon us both, might be suspected, if I were disposed to be suspicious, as one reason why it was shown to neither of us, but left concealed among the papers to appear hereafter as a charge, not controverted at the time, whereby a future accusation might be confirmed. Mr. Adams spoke in strong terms of your having no right to enter notes upon papers without our consent or knowledge, and talked of making a counter entry, in which he would have shown that your assertion of our having "given an order for the payment of all Mr. Williams' demands" was not conformable to truth nor to the express terms of the order, but his attention being taken up with what related to his departure, was probably the cause of his omitting to make that entry. On the whole, I judged it now incumbent on me, for my own sake and Mr. Adams', as well as for the public interest, to have those accounts fully examined, as soon as possible, by skilful and impartial persons, of which I informed you in mine of the 13th instant, requesting you to aid the inquiry by stating your objections, that they might be considered by those judges, which I am sorry you do not think fit to comply with. I have no desire to

screen Mr. Williams on account of his being my nephew; if he is guilty of what you charge him with, I care not how soon he is deservedly punished and the family purged of him; for I take it that a rogue living in [a] family is a greater disgrace to it than one *hanged out* of it. If he is innocent, justice requires that his character should be speedily cleared from the heavy charge with which it has been loaded.

I have the honor to be, etc.

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXV

TO A. LEE

Passy, 27 March, 1779.

Sir:—The offer you make of sending me copies, sealed and authenticated, of all the papers in your hands is very satisfactory; and as you say they are but few I suppose it may soon be done. I imagined, when I desired you to send me the originals, that they were a great many, and at present of no importance to you, and therefore not worth copying. I assure you I had not the least intention of depriving you of any thing you might think necessary for your vindication. The suspicion is groundless and injurious. In a former letter I offered you authenticated copies of any remaining in my hands that you should judge might be of such use to you; and I now offer you the originals if you had rather have them, and will content myself with keeping copies.

Mr. Adams did not, as you insinuate, exact any

promise of me to arrange and keep in order the papers he sent me. He knew such a promise unnecessary, for that I had always kept in order and by themselves the public papers that were in my hands, without having them so confounded among a multitude of other papers "that they could not be found when called for."

I have the honor to be with great respect, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXVI

TO —— SAYRE

Passy, 31 March, 1779.

Sir:—I have just received your favor of the 10th inst. from Copenhagen. The account you give of the disposition of the Swedish Court is very agreeable. I saw in the newspapers that a deputy of Congress was at Stockholm; did you obtain the audiences you mention on assuming that character? The information you did not choose to venture by the post from Copenhagen may be safely sent from Amsterdam.

I am not, as you have heard, the sole representative of America in Europe. The commissions of Mr. A. Lee, Mr. Wm. Lee, and Mr. Izard, to different courts still subsist. I am only sole with regard to France. Nor have I power to give you any employ worth your accepting.

Much has been said by the English about divisions

in America. No division of any consequence has arisen there. Petty disputes between particular persons about private interests there are always in every country; but in regard to the great point of independence there is no difference of sentiment in the Congress, and as the Congress are the annual voice of the people, it is easy to judge of their sentiments by those of their representatives.

The taking of Savannah makes a noise in England and helps to keep up their spirits; but I apprehend, before the summer is over, they will find the possession of that capital of Georgia of as little consequence as their former possessions of Boston and Philadelphia; and that the distempers of that unwholesome part of the country will very much weaken, if not ruin, that army.

The principal difficulty at present in America consists in the depreciation of paper currency, owing to the over-quantities issued and the diminished demand of it in commerce. But as the Congress has taken measures for sinking it expeditiously, and the several governments are taxing vigorously for that purpose, there is a prospect of its recovering a proper value. In the meantime, though an evil to particulars, there is some advantage to the public in the depreciation, as large nominal values are more easily paid in taxes, and the debt by that means more easily extinguished. B. Franklin.

DCCLXXVII

TO WILLIAM LEE

PASSY, 2 April, 1779.

SIR:—Before I apply for the arms you desire, I wish to be informed whether your brother did not apply for them at the same time he applied for the cannon he obtained, or since, in consequence of the letter you mention to have sent us in January last, and whether they were refused or promised.

Since I had the honor of seeing you I have received an application from the government of Maryland for a similar quantity of arms and military stores, which I am requested to obtain in the same manner, and these, with the orders of Congress, will make so vast a quantity, that I apprehend greater difficulties in obtaining them. I should be glad, therefore, if a part could be obtained elsewhere, that the quantity now to be applied for might be diminished. On this occasion permit me to mention that the D'Acostas have presented a memorial to me setting forth that they had provided arms, etc., to a great amount, in consequence of a contract made with you through your brother, and that for no other reason but because they were not finished at the time agreed, there having been a delay of a month, which they say was not their fault, but inevitable, he had refused to take them. Upon this they desire that I would procure justice to be done them, or that I would approve of their sending the goods and endeavor to have the contract complied with on the part of Virginia. I declined having any thing to do

with the affair, but I wish you to consider whether it would not be prudent to moderate this little difference with those people, and take the advantage of sending those arms, which have been proved good, and I suppose still lie at Nantes ready to be shipped immediately, rather than wait the success of a doubtful application.

I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCLXXVIII

TO JOHN ADAMS [1]

PASSY, 3 April, 1779.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor to write me of the 24th past. I am glad you have been at Brest, as your presence there has contributed to expedite the operations of Capt. Landais in refitting his ship. I think with you that more has been made of the conspiracy than was necessary; but that it would have been well if some of the most guilty could have received a proper punishment. As that was impracticable under our present naval code, I hope you will, on your return, obtain an amendment of it. I approve of clothing the midshipmen and petty officers agreeably to their request to you, and hope you have ordered it, without waiting to hear from me; and I now desire that whatever else you may judge for the good of the service, our friends and circumstances considered, you would in my behalf give directions for, as the great distance makes

[1] Mr. Adams was on board the *Alliance* awaiting her sailing. Mr. Sparks prints his cordial answer to this letter, which latter he does not seem to have seen.

it inconvenient to send to me on every occasion; and I can confide in your prudence that you will allow no expense that is unnecessary.

My gout continues to disable me from walking longer than formerly; but on Tuesday the 23d past I thought myself able to go through the ceremony, and accordingly went to court,[1] had my audience of the king in the new character, presented my letter of credence, and was received very graciously. After which I went the rounds with the other foreign ministers, in visiting all the royal family. The fatigue, however, was a little too much for my feet, and disabled me for near another week. Upon the whole I can assure you that I do not think the good-will of this court to the good cause of America is at all diminished by the late little reverses in the fortune of war; and I hope Spain, who has now forty-nine ships of the line and thirty-one frigates ready for service, will soon, by declaring, turn the scale. Remember me affectionately to Master Johnny, and believe me, with great esteem, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXIX

TO JOSHUA JOHNSON

Passy, 8 April, 1779.

Sir:—Mr. Wm. Lee has lately been here from Frankfort. He has desired me to make such an

[1] Franklin had been prevented till now being presented at court in his new character of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary.—Editor.

application in behalf of the State of Virginia as you request in behalf of Maryland. Messrs. D'Acosta & Co. had complained to me that they had provided what Mr. Lee wanted, in pursuance of a contract made with Mr. A. Lee, who had refused to take the goods off his hands. I proposed to Mr. Wm. Lee to accommodate this little difference, and take those goods now lying ready at Nantes to be shipped, rather than wait the event of an uncertain application to government. He absolutely refuses, and says you may take them for Maryland, if you please. Pray let me know, as soon as may be, whether it will not suit you to agree for them with these gentlemen.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXX

TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Passy, 8 April, 1779.

Dear Jonathan:—Too much business, too much interruption by friendly visits, and a little remaining indisposition, have occasioned the delay in answering your late letters.

You desire a line "relative to the complexion of affairs." If you mean our affairs at this court, they wear as good a complexion as ever they did.

I do not know what to advise concerning M. Monthieu's proposition. Follow your own judgment. If you doubt, set down all the reasons, pro and con, in opposite columns on a sheet of paper,

and when you have considered them two or three days, perform an operation similar to that in some questions of algebra; observe what reasons or motives in each column are equal in weight, one to one, one to two, two to three, or the like, and when you have struck out from both sides all the equalities, you will see in which column remains the balance. It is for want of having all the motives for and against an important action present in or before the mind at the same time, that people hesitate and change their determinations backwards and forwards day after day, as different sets of reasons are recollected or forgot, and if they conclude and act upon the last set, it is perhaps not because those were the best, but because they happened to be present in the mind, and the better absent. This kind of *moral algebra* I have often practised in important and dubious concerns, and though it cannot be mathematically exact, I have found it extremely useful. By the way, if you do not learn it, I apprehend you will never be married.

There is in one account of the copper an article—*des mines de St. Bell*, 63,400. I suppose it was the word *mines*, not *Rosette*, that was translated *ore*.

Let me know, if you can, what answer the gentleman receives from London, on his inquiries concerning a supposed letter.

I send you herewith the paper you desire respecting the settlement of your accounts. I send, also, an attested copy of Mr. Lee's reasons for not passing them. In answer to my letter requesting him to furnish the gentlemen who are to examine them with such further objections as he may have against them,

he writes me that "I must excuse him, now that it is no longer his indispensable duty, from concerning himself with a business which is in much abler hands. If Congress," he adds, "should call upon me for further reasons than those that I have already given, it will then be my duty to act, and I will obey." I cannot conceive his reason for not giving his further reasons, if he has any, on the present occasion, when they would be so proper; but he refused, and I cannot compel him.

I shall file the letters and papers you sent me with your accounts. I have received back those you enclosed in yours of March 27th, relating to M. Monthieu's contract. I have received, also, Messrs. Horneca & Fizeaux's invoice, and will return it by next post with the order you desire.

I have no objection to your mentioning the fact relative to the censure of M. Monthieu's accounts.

I am ever your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXI

TO J. ADAMS

Passy, 21 April, 1779.

Sir:—I have received your two favors of the 13th inst. I am much obliged to you for undertaking the trouble of contenting the officers and people of the *Alliance*. I must now beg leave to make a little addition to that trouble by requesting your attention to the situation of the officers and sailors, late prisoners

in England, which Mr. Williams will acquaint you with, and that you would likewise order for them such necessaries and comforts as we can afford. I wish we were able to do all they want and desire, but the scantiness of our funds and the multitude of demands prevent it.

The English papers talk much of their apprehensions about Spain; I hope they have some foundation.

With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXII

TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Passy, 21 April, 1779.

Dear Master Johnny:—I am glad you have seen Brest and the fleet there. It must give you an idea of the naval force of this kingdom which you will long retain with pleasure.

I caused the letters you enclosed to me to be carefully delivered, but have not received answers to be sent you.

Benjamin, whom you so kindly remember, would have been glad to hear of your welfare, but he is gone to Geneva. As he is destined to live in a Protestant country, and a republic, I thought it best to finish his education where the proper principles prevail.

I heartily wish you a good voyage and a happy sight of your mamma, being really your affectionate friend,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXIII

TO JOSIAH QUINCY

PASSY, 22 April, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I received your very kind letter by Mr. Bradford, who appears a very sensible and amiable young gentleman, to whom I should with pleasure render any services in my power upon your much respected recommendation; but I understand he returns immediately.

It is with great sincerity I join you in acknowledging and admiring the dispensations of Providence in our favor. America has only to be thankful and to persevere. God will finish his work, and establish their freedom; and the lovers of liberty will flock from all parts of Europe with their fortunes to partake with us of that freedom, as soon as peace is restored.

I am exceedingly pleased with your account of the French politeness and civility, as it appeared among the officers and people of their fleet. They have certainly advanced in those respects many degrees beyond the English. I find them here a most amiable nation to live with. The Spaniards are, by common opinion, supposed to be cruel, the English proud, the Scotch insolent, the Dutch avaricious, etc., but I think the French have no national vice ascribed to them. They have some frivolities, but they are harmless. To dress their heads so that a hat cannot be put on them, and then wear their hats under their arms, and to fill their noses with tobacco, may be called follies, perhaps, but they are not vices. They are only the effects of the tyranny of custom. In

short, there is nothing wanting in the character of a Frenchman that belongs to that of an agreeable and worthy man. There are only some trifles surplus, or which might be spared.

Will you permit me, while I do them this justice, to hint a little censure on our own country people, which I do in good-will, wishing the cause removed. You know the necessity we are under of supplies from Europe, and the difficulty we have at present in making returns. The interest bills would do a good deal towards purchasing arms, ammunition, clothing, sail-cloth, and other necessaries for defence. Upon inquiry of those who present these bills to me for acceptance, what the money is to be laid out in, I find that most of it is for superfluities, and more than half of it for tea. How unhappily in this instance the folly of our people and the avidity of our merchants concur to weaken and impoverish our country. I formerly computed that we consumed before the war, in that single article, the value of five hundred thousand pounds sterling annually. Much of this was saved by stopping the use of it. I honored the virtuous resolution of our women in foregoing that little gratification, and I lament that such virtue should be of so short duration. Five hundred thousand pounds sterling annually laid out in defending ourselves, or annoying our enemies, would have great effect. With what face can we ask aids and subsidies from our friends while we are wasting our own wealth in such prodigality? With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXIV

TO SAMUEL COOPER

PASSY, 22 April, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I received your valuable letter by the Marquis de Lafayette, and another by Mr. Bradford. I can only write a few words in answer to the latter, the former not being at hand. The depreciation of our money must, as you observe, greatly affect salary men, widows, and orphans. Methinks this evil deserves the attention of the several legislatures, and ought, if possible to be remedied by some equitable law particularly adapted to their circumstances. I took all the pains I could in Congress to prevent the depreciation, by proposing, first, that the bills should bear interest; this was rejected, and they were struck as you see them. Secondly, after the first emission, I proposed that we should stop, strike no more, but borrow on interest those we had issued. This was not then approved of, and more bills were issued. When, from the too great quantity, they began to depreciate, we agreed to borrow on interest; and I proposed that, in order to fix the value of the principal, the interest should be promised in hard dollars. This was objected to as impracticable; but I still continue of opinion that by sending out cargoes to purchase it, we might have brought in money sufficient for that purpose, as we brought in powder, etc., etc.; and that, though the attempt must have been attended with a disadvantage, the loss would have been a less mischief than any measure attending the discredit of the bills, which threatens to

take out of our hands the great instrument of our defence.

The Congress did at last come into the proposal of paying the interest in real money. But when the whole mass of the currency was *under way* in depreciation, the momentum of its descent was too great to be stopped by a power that might at first have been sufficient to prevent the beginning of the motion. The *only remedy* now seems to be a diminution of the quantity by a vigorous taxation of great *nominal* sums, which the people are more able to pay, in proportion to the quantity and diminished value; and the *only consolation* under the evil is, that the public debt is proportionably diminished with the depreciation; and this by a kind of imperceptible tax, every one having paid a part of it in the fall of value that took place between the receiving and paying such sums as passed through his hands. For it should always be remembered that the original intention was to sink the bills by taxes, which would as effectually extinguish the debt as an actual redemption.

This effect of paper currency is not understood on this side the water. And indeed the whole is a mystery even to the politicians, how we have been able to continue a war four years without money, and how we could pay with paper that had no previously fixed fund appropriated specifically to redeem it. This currency, as we manage it, is a wonderful machine. It performs its office when we issue it; it pays and clothes the troops, and provides victuals and ammunition; and when we are obliged to issue a quantity excessive, it pays itself off by depreciation.

Our affairs in general stand in a fair light throughout Europe. Our cause is universally approved. Our constitutions of government have been translated and printed in most languages, and are so much admired for the spirit of liberty that reigns in them, that it is generally agreed we shall have a vast accession of national property after the war, from every part of this continent, and particularly from the British Islands. We have only to persevere and to be happy.

Yours, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXV

FROM DAVID HARTLEY

London, 22 April, 1779.

My Dear Friend:—The bearer of this, and some other papers, is a very sensible and worthy gentleman, with whom I had the pleasure of contracting an acquaintance since the commencement of the American troubles, originally upon the business of the American prisoners. It is a satisfaction to me at all times to have found him a friend to the restoration of peace between the two countries. It has likewise been an additional satisfaction and confirmation to me in my own thoughts upon that subject, to find that his sentiments, I think upon most or all of the subjects upon which we have conversed, have coincided with mine. We both seem possessed of the opinion that some plan of opening a nego-

tiation upon preliminaries, which each side might find to be a sufficient security to itself, might be practicable; and then your sentiment, which you gave me in your letter some years ago, might have its free scope and effect, viz.: *A little time given for cooling might have excellent effects.*

The sentiments I have opened to you in my late letters for some months past, and which I have reduced in an enclosed paper into a more specific shape, seem to me, upon very repeated reflection, to promise the fairest ground of good expectation. These propositions originate from myself as a mediator; I have communications with both sides, but certainly no authority to make proposals from either; and perhaps neither side, if I were to make the propositions separately to each (being myself unauthorized), might give me positive consent. Each side separately might say No, from what is called political prudence; and yet each side might secretly wish that the offer could be made, with a *done first*, from the other party. I think the proposition of a truce for five or seven years, leaving all things in the present dispute *in statu quo*, must be advantageous to all parties, if it were only in consideration that a general satisfactory peace to all parties *may* come among the *excellent effects of time given for cooling*. We can but fight it out at last. War never comes too late; wisdom may step in between. These matters have stolen upon us, and have arisen to great and formidable consequences from small and unexpected beginnings; but henceforward we should know by experience what to

expect. If the rage of war could but be abated for a sufficient length of time for reason and reflection to operate, I think it would never revive. I cannot pretend to forecast the result of any negotiation, but I think war would not revive, which is all that I want for my argument. Peace is a *bonum in se*, whereas the most favorable events of war are but relatively lesser evils; certainly they are evils; *mala in se*, not *bona in se*.

I hope that a cessation of hostilities would produce a renewal of reflection; but, even to take the argument at the worst advantage, the two parties are at a cooling distance of three thousand miles asunder. If the flames of war could be but once extinguished, does not the Atlantic Ocean contain cold water enough to prevent their bursting out again? I am very strongly of opinion that the two nations of Great Britain and North America would accord to the proposition of a truce *for cooling*. I cannot say whether a British ministry would accord to it, because they will not tell me; nor can I say whether an American plenipotentiary would accord to it, because, probably, you will not tell me. I put myself into your hands, however, when I tell you frankly I am of opinion that both would accord to it if there could be a *done first* on either side, to bind the bargain fast. You have the odds of me in this matter, because you know one half of the question; and I cannot give you any proof on the other side, but only my own presumptive judgment upon observation, and upon a course of reasoning in my own thoughts.

But, for France. My judgment would be that if the proposition of the proposed preliminaries should be agreeable to America, France would do very unhandsomely to defeat it by their refusal. I likewise think it the interest of France, because their interest leads them to go to a certain point, and no further. There is a disparity in the operation of the terms of the alliance on the part of France, and on the part of America. The more vigorously France interposes, the better for America; in proportion to their exertions they create, less or more, a diversion of the British force. This reasoning goes straight forward for America, but it is not so with France. There is a certain point to France, beyond which their work would fail, and recoil upon themselves. If they were to drive the British ministry totally to abandon the American war, it would become totally a French war. The events of a twelvemonth past seem to bear testimony to this course of reasoning. The disadvantage upon the bargain to America is, that the efficacy of the French alliance to them presupposes their continuance in the war. The demur to France is that the liberation of their new ally recoils with double weight of the war upon themselves, without any ulterior points of advantage in view, as dependent upon that alliance. I think the interest of all parties coincides with the proposition of preliminaries.

The proposed preliminaries appear to me to be just and equitable to all parties; but the great object with me is to come to some preliminaries. I could almost add, whatever those preliminaries

might be, provided a suspension of arms for an adequate term of years were one, I think it would be ten thousand to one against any future renewal of the war. It is not necessary to enter at large into the reasons which induce me to think that the British ministry, as well as the American plenipotentiary, would consent to the terms of the proposed preliminaries; for indeed I do not know that I am founded in that opinion with respect to either, but still I believe it of both.

But what can a private person do in such a case, wishing to be a mediator for peace, having access to both parties, but equally uncertain of the reception of his mediation on either side? I must hesitate to take any public step, as by a proposition in Parliament, or by any other means, to drive the parties to an explanation on any specific proposals; and yet I am very unwilling to let the session pass without some proposition, upon which the parties may meet, if they should be so inclined, as I suspect them to be. I have been endeavoring to feel pulses for some months, but all is dumb show. I cannot say that I meet with any thing discouraging, to my apprehension, either as to the equitableness or practicability of the proposition for preliminaries. If I could but simply receive sufficient encouragement that I should not run any hazard of obstructing any other practicable propositions by obtruding mine, I should be very much satisfied to come forward in that case with mine, to furnish a beginning, at least, which might lead to peace.

There is nothing that I wish so much as to have

an opportunity of seeing and conversing with you, having many things to say to you; but if that cannot yet happen, I have only to say that whatever communication you may think proper to make to me, which may lead to peace, you may be assured that I shall be most strenuous in applying it to that end. In all cases of difficulty in human life there must be confidence somewhere to enable us to extricate nations from the evils attendant upon national disputes, as they arise out of national passions, jealousies, and points of honor. I am not sure whether the extreme caution and diffidence of persons in political life be not the cause almost as frequently of the unnecessary protraction of the miseries of war as of the final production of any superior good to any state. Peace now is better than peace a twelvemonth hence, at least by all the lives that may be lost in the meanwhile, and by all the accumulated miseries that may intervene by that delay. When I speak of the necessity of confidence, I would not have you think that I trust to all professions, promiscuously, with confidence; my thoughts are free respecting all parties, and for myself, if I thought it necessary for the end of attaining any additional confidence in your esteem, to enable me to co-operate the more effectually towards the restoration of peace, there is nothing that I would wish you to be assured of but this, that no fallacious offers of insincerity, nor any pretexts for covering secret designs, or for obtaining unfair advantages, shall ever pass through my hands.

Believe me truly to be, not only a lover of my

country, but a sincere friend to peace and to the rights of mankind, and ever most affectionately yours, D. HARTLEY.

Observations by Mr. Hartley

Lord North consented to Mr. Hartley's proposition, for endeavoring to procure from the American plenipotentiary or plenipotentiaries some opening that they would be willing to commence to parley on propositions of peace between Great Britain and America; and supposed the terms which Mr. Hartley had in view would be something like a tacit cession of independence to America, with a truce for a certain term of years, to serve as a basis for a general treaty of accommodation and final settlement.

This last application (which was made on the 20th of April, 1779) of Mr. Hartley to Lord North, after several previous conferences on the subject, is the ground of the present confidential communication with Dr. Franklin, on the part of Mr. Hartley, who states to Dr. Franklin, as he did to Lord North, that an auspicious beginning of a negotiation is *dimidium facti.*

Mr. Hartley's ideas of the probable course of the negotiation would be to the following effect:

1. Five commissioners (or any three of them) to be appointed on the part of his Britannic Majesty, to treat, consult, and agree upon the final settlement and pacification of the present troubles, upon safe, honorable, and permanent terms, subject to ratification by Parliament.

2. That any one of the aforesaid commissioners may be empowered to agree, as a preliminary, to a suspension of hostilities by sea and land, for a certain term of five or seven years.

3. That any one of the aforesaid commissioners be empowered to agree, as a second preliminary, to suspend the operation and effect of any and all acts of Parliament respecting America, for a certain term of five or seven years.

4. That it is expected, as a third preliminary, that America should be released, free and unengaged, from any treaties with foreign powers which may tend to embarrass or defeat the present proposed negotiation.

5. That a general treaty for negotiation shall be set on foot as soon as may be, after the agreement of the foregoing preliminaries.

N. B.—A doubt seeming to arise from Lord North relative to the probability of any explanatory communication on the part of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Hartley expressed, he thought it possible that, as a known friend to peace, he might be considered by Dr. Franklin as a depot of any communications which may serve from time to time to facilitate the terms of peace; which, therefore, prevents this communication from being considered as any direct overture from Lord North to Dr. Franklin, or from Dr. Franklin to Lord North; but as it is merely a mediatorial proposition of Mr. Hartley, as a private person, for the purpose of bringing the parties to a parley.

DCCLXXXVI

TO JOHN ADAMS, ESQ.

PASSY, 24 April, 1779.

SIR:—By the enclosed letter from M. de Sartine expressing his Majesty's desire that the *Alliance* should be retained here a little longer, you will see that I am under a kind of necessity of disappointing you in your intentions of making your passage in that vessel, which would be more unpleasing to me but for these considerations, that possibly it may be safer for you to go in a ship where the crew, not being so mixed, can be better depended on, where you will not be so incommoded by the misunderstandings subsisting between the officers and their captain, and where you will have the society of the French Ambassador, M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who appears to me a most amiable man, and of very sensible and pleasing conversation. I hope this will in some measure compensate for the inconvenience of shifting your stores from one ship to the other. And I as shall order the *Alliance* to L'Orient, where the king's frigate is that carries the ambassador, the removal of your things from one ship to the other will be more easy; you can even go hither in the *Alliance* if you choose it. The ships in the American trade which were at Nantes when I offered them the convoy of the *Alliance* having declined that offer and sailed, as I understand, under another and perhaps safer convoy, makes her immediate departure for America less necessary, and perhaps she may now make a cruise in these seas, for which I under-

stand she will have time, and which will be probably more advantageous, and therefore more satisfactory, to her people than a direct return. I hope she may procure us some more prisoners to exchange the rest of our countrymen, and at the same time reimburse us the charges of her refitting, which you know we stand much in need of. M. Dumas writes me from the Hague of the 19th: "Je sçais depuis hier *de bonne part*, que l'Espagne s'est enfin declarée. Cela fera un bon effet ici et partout." I hope his intelligence is good, but nothing of it has yet transpired here.

Enclosed I send you a cover which I have just received from Martinique, directed to me, but containing only a letter for you. The cover being unskilfully sealed over, the seal of your letter was so attached to it that I had like to have broke open the one in opening the other. I send you also another letter which came from Spain.

I am obliged for your offer of taking charge of my despatches for America. I shall send them down to you by M. de la Luzerne, who is to set off in a few days.

With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCLXXXVII

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, 27 April, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I have, at the request of M. de Sartine, postponed the sending of the *Alliance* to

America, and have ordered her to proceed immediately from Nantes to L'Orient, where she is to be furnished with her complement of men, to join your little squadron, and act under your command.

The Marquis de Lafayette will be with you soon. It has been observed that joint expeditions of land and sea forces often miscarry, through jealousies and misunderstandings between the officers of the different corps. This must happen where there are little minds, actuated more by personal views of profit or honor to themselves, than by the warm and sincere desire of good to their country. Knowing you both as I do, and your just manner of thinking on these occasions, I am confident nothing of the kind can happen between you, and that it is unnecessary for me to recommend to either of you that condescension, mutual good-will, and harmony which contribute so much to success in such undertakings.

I look upon this expedition as an introduction only to greater trusts and more extensive commands, and as a kind of trial of both your abilities and of your fitness in temper and disposition for acting in concert with others. I flatter myself, therefore, that nothing will happen that may give impressions to the disadvantage of either of you when greater affairs shall come under consideration. As this is understood to be an American expedition, under the Congress' commission and colors, the Marquis, who is a major-general in that service, has of course the step in point of rank, and he must have command of the land forces, which are committed by the king to his care; but the command of the ships will be entirely in you; in

which I am persuaded that whatever authority his rank might in strictness give him, he will not have the least desire to interfere with you. There is honor enough to be got for both of you, if the expedition is conducted with a prudent unanimity. The circumstance is indeed a little unusual; for there is not only a junction of land and sea forces, but there is also a junction of Frenchmen and Americans, which increases the difficulty of maintaining a good understanding. A cool, prudent conduct in the chiefs is, therefore, the more necessary; and I trust neither of you will in that respect be deficient.[1] With my best wishes for your success, health, and honor, I remain, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

[1] The expedition here referred to, which was intended to act on the coast of England, was at length changed by the French government. The following letter on the occasion was written by the Marquis de Lafayette to Paul Jones:

"PARIS, 22 May, 1779.

"DEAR SIR:—I dare say you will be very sorry to hear that the king's dispositions concerning our plan have been quite altered, and that instead of meeting you, I am now going to take the command of the king's regiment at Saintes. What will be further determined about your squadron is yet uncertain, and the ministers are to consult about it with Dr. Franklin. Political and military reasons have occasioned the alteration of things, and I am only to tell you, my good friend, how sorry I feel not to be a witness of your success, abilities, and glory.

"I hope every thing will be arranged for the best, and the more calculated for the common advantage. Be convinced, sir, that nothing could gratify me more than the pleasure of having again something of the kind to undertake with such an officer as Captain Jones. That occasion I shall ever wish for, and shall, I hope, find before the end of the war. With the sincerest affection and esteem, I am, etc.,

"LAFAYETTE."

DCCLXXXVIII

INSTRUCTIONS TO JOHN PAUL JONES, COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN SQUADRON IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES, NOW IN THE PORT OF L'ORIENT

1st. His Majesty having been pleased to grant some troops for a particular expedition proposed to annoy our common enemy, in which the sea force under your command might have an opportunity of distinguishing itself, you are to receive on board the ships of war, and the other vessels destined for that purpose, the troops that shall present themselves to you, afford them such accommodations as may be most proper for preserving their health, and convey them to such port or place as their commander shall desire to land them at.

2dly. When the troops are landed you are to aid, by all means in your power, their operations, as they will be instructed in like manner to aid and support those you may make with your ships, that so, by this concurrence and union of your different forces, all that such a compound strength is capable of may be effected.

3dly. You are during the expedition never to depart from the troops so as not to be able to protect them in case of a repulse; and at all events you are to endeavor to effect their complete reëmbarkation on board the ships and transports under your command, when the expedition shall be ended.

4thly. You are to bring to France all the English seamen you may happen to take prisoners, in order to

complete the good work you have already made such progress in, of delivering by an exchange the rest of our countrymen now languishing in the gaols of Great Britain.

5thly. As many of your officers and people have lately escaped from English prisons, either in Europe or America, you are to be particularly attentive to their conduct towards the prisoners which the fortune of war may throw into your hands, lest resentment of the more than barbarous usage by the English in many places towards the Americans should occasion a retaliation, and an imitation of what ought rather to be detested and avoided for the sake of humanity and for the honor of our country.

6thly. In the same view, although the English have burnt wantonly many defenceless towns in America, you are not to follow this example, unless where a reasonable ransom is refused; in which case your own generous feelings, as well as this instruction, will induce you to give timely notice of your intention, that sick and ancient persons, women, and children, may be first removed.

Done at Passy, this 28th day of April, 1779.

B. Franklin.

Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of France.

DCCLXXXIX

MEMORIAL OF ARTHUR LEE[1]

PARIS, 1 May, 1779.

The demand that Dr. Franklin has thought proper to make from me of some public papers requires some observations, that Congress may judge of the real motive of demanding them.

So little was Dr. Franklin's care about these papers till since Mr. Deane's accusations, that he would not give himself the trouble of assisting Mr. Adams and myself in examining and taking a list of them, which last I took with my own hands and left at Passy. About the time that Mr. Deane's letter was made public here, Dr. Franklin, wrote Mr. Adams, desiring he would put the papers which the latter had kept till then into his hands. This was complied with, and he then probably discovered that there were some of Mr. Williams' letters to the Commissioners and one of the accounts with M. Monthieu in my hands which might prove disagreeable truths.

I was confined to my bed when Mr. Deane's letter was announced for the next week in the *Courier de l'Europe*, a paper printed in France, and read through Europe, because it is in the French language. I sent my secretary to Dr. Franklin to desire his concurrence in writing to M. de Vergennes,

[1] To illustrate the sort of colleague Dr. Franklin had to deal with in Arthur Lee, I insert here a Memorial which he addressed to Congress shortly after the receipt of Dr. Franklin's letter of the 13th of March. It is difficult to ascribe the address of such a document to Congress to any better motive than a desire to secure the commission of a full minister which later was wisely bestowed upon Franklin.—EDITOR.

to request him to forbid the publication of that letter, as it was likely to injure and disgrace the cause of our country. Dr. Franklin not only did not concur, but by not making me an answer he kept me in suspense till my application was too late. Thus this libel upon Congress and their servants was permitted to be circulated through all Europe. Dr. Franklin, like Mr. Deane, appeared totally regardless of the mischief it might do to the public, provided it would defame me. This conduct announced such a determined enmity, that I was not a little surprised at receiving from the same person on the 18th of February a letter, enclosing among others a copy of the resolve of Congress recommending harmony and confidence between us, with a declaration that it was agreeable to his inclinations.

I was willing to flatter myself, however, that the profession had some sincerity in it, and was determined to cultivate it by my answer, which I returned that day. But the next day undeceived me, when Dr. Franklin's grandson called upon me with a letter of the same date, requiring all the papers in my hands to be delivered, and not one word in reply to mine whether Mr. Deane had used his name against me by his authority. It appeared therefore that the sole purpose of this first letter was to announce his authority and induce me to give up the papers, or furnish him with a pretence for saying that I interrupted the harmony he so cordially offered. This harmony I know from long experience there is but one way of preserving,—namely, to have no opinion of one's own, but in all things submit to his absolute

dictation, and coincide with views however mean and selfish one may think them. Every one here must move as his satellite and shine only as he is pleased to illuminate him. To appear to have any influence here or in America, to do or propose any thing for the public good, and not to lend one's self as the instrument of his aggrandizement,—these are criminal things in his eyes. Jealous and irritable he easily takes offence, and pursues with secret but implacable vengeance the destruction of those who have so offended him.

These sentiments of him are not set down in passion or in malice, but in sober conviction, and such as I should be obliged to give in at the bar of heaven.

It was in this temper that he conceived an enmity against Mr. Izard, my brother, and myself, and has sought our disgrace and ruin both here and in America, not openly and in person, but by various agents tutored and interested for the purpose. Grown bolder at length, he has endeavored to starve the two former and their families here, or compel them to resign and return to America. The man who saw with perfect indifference 40,000 livres of the public money applied by Mr. Deane, while a Commissioner, to private purposes; who never expressed one word of disapprobation when the same gentleman, not being in Commission, and being in no apparent want of it, made free with 38,715 livres of the public money, and who paid his nephew, Mr. Williams, 50,000 livres of the same money, pretendedly remitted from Nantes in a bill on Mr. Chaumont, which never appeared to your Commissioners, and to pay

an account with the Commissioners which they did not know ever existed, and which has never yet been produced, has become all at once, and in the case of those he hates, most vigilant in the expenditure of the public money; and equivocating upon the words of the resolution, though in direct violation of its manifest meaning, says: Gentlemen, you are not at your courts, and therefore it is not necessary you should eat. But we are awaiting under the orders of Congress to embrace the first opportunity of going thither. No matter, I shall give you no money.[1]

Need Congress have any more proofs of the temper and conduct of this gentleman, and how impossible it is for harmony to subsist where such principles and practices prevail, unless all their Commissioners were equally corrupt, and would harmonize in sacrificing the public to private views of mutual vanity, avarice, and ambition.

I have entered into this detail to show that recon-

[1] Another reason has been found out for refusing the Commissioners money, which is, that the bills for the payment of interest drawn on France must be protested for so much as is supplied to them. When the facts on that head are stated, it will be easy to judge whether this is a pretext or a reason. The amount of the bills to be drawn and payable by the 10th March, 1779, was two millions and a half. We had stated this to the ministry here, and desired that sum from them for the payment. If they furnished it the bills would be paid; if not, they must be protested; Dr. Franklin not having the command of above 400,000 livres. If the bills were to be protested at all, was it, or could it be, material whether they were protested for 2,050,000 or for 2,000,000? The starving, disgracing, and affronting two Commissioners would not make any greater difference for half a year, till they could have had the further commands of Congress, and as large a sum as the whole of this was lavished upon his nephew in a single article of accounts. (A. L.)

cilement and harmony in conducting the public business neither was nor is Dr. Franklin's intention, and that as nothing interrupted that harmony so much as a persuasion in him that we should never lend ourselves to his private views, as Mr. Deane did, so the same principle will forever prevent him from acting in conformity with the wishes of Congress, expressed in that wise resolve. I will give another instance, which is conclusive in showing this to be his unalterable disposition. Upon the death of Mr. Morris, my brother, having observed that Dr. Franklin's determination to provide for his nephew, Mr. Williams, and his suspicions that we were resolved to oppose him, prevented all harmony, and was greatly injurious to the public business, was in hopes of removing all cause of disagreement and contest by appointing Mr. Williams joint deputy commercial agent with Mr. John Lloyd, of South Carolina, till the pleasure of Congress should be known. From the same views, Mr. Izard and myself approved of the plan, and to strengthen the bands of union it was proposed to do it with the approbation of the Commissioners. My brother, therefore, wrote to us for our concurrence. Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane refused it, and the former in the most explicit terms under his hand. Mr. Lloyd declined acting without the concurrence of the Commissioners, because he had seen the impossibility of executing the office while they authorized an opposition to it; and Mr. Williams refusing to accept the deputation without Dr. Franklin's approbation, the plan was frustrated, and my brother

appointed Mr. Schweighauser, whom Mr. Williams immediately opposed.

The fairest opportunity of conciliation and harmony was thus offered to Dr. Franklin; and Mr. Deane, who knew all this, had the unexampled wickedness to accuse my brother to the people of having dismissed Mr. Williams in favor of another.

Dr. Franklin has in his possession the list of all the papers that were left by Mr. Deane, made by me. By that he might have seen whether there were any wanting that related to accounts he had yet to settle, and asked me for them, if this, as he says, had been the real object of his demand, and not that of getting from me such as might be evidence of the very undue transactions of Mr. Deane and his nephew. I have examined, as I promised, all the papers, and found but one relating to unsettled accounts, which I sent to him.[1]

Dr. Franklin says in his last letter, that he has no concern or interest in Mr. Deane's accusations. Does he think men so easily imposed upon as to be persuaded that he has no interest in the event of a measure which cannot disgrace Mr. Deane without dishonoring him, as having always concurred with and vouched for his good conduct? Has he no interest in my ruin when I have incurred his utmost malevolence by constantly opposing his schemes of private interest? Is his hatred of me any secret; and is he known to be of so mild a character as to

[1] "Paris, 26 March, 1779.

"Mr. A. Lee presents his compliments to Dr. Franklin, and has the honor of enclosing him one of Mr. Schweighauser's accounts which he found among his papers." (A. L.)

have no concern or interest in an accusation of him he hates? To show, too, how little he takes a part with Mr. Deane, upon his being appointed minister, he put up Mr. Deane's bust in his drawing-room, as if Mr. Deane was the most meritorious man of the present age. The man who he knows has libelled Congress, traduced their servants, and endeavored to excite popular commotions by what Dr. Franklin knew to be most false and wicked accusations; the man who had acted the impostor here by pretending to be a Commissioner after his recall, and has, as much as an individual can do, disgraced the cause and character of America in the estimation of Europe, is the person whom Dr. Franklin, the servant of that Congress whom Mr. Deane has insulted, the representative of those States he has endeavored to deceive and disturb, has thought proper to select and exhibit to the public as his hero and his tutelary deity. I do not ask whether this is improper. Could any thing be devised more indecent and more culpable? If Mr. Deane's pride and vanity were censurable for having busts made of himself, as if he were an emperor, or the favorite of an emperor, what does Dr. Franklin's conduct deserve, who, after what had passed, and in his situation, should choose to set up this man for the public admiration?[1] From the sovereign idea he entertains of his own influence, he no doubt expected by this single act to turn the opinion here in favor of an impostor, and give credit

[1] Whoever is acquainted with the particular genius of this people, and especially of this place, will know that the setting up this bust at such a time was very artfully adapted to this purpose. (A. L.)

to accusations which he knew to be malicious, by showing that Dr. Franklin was his friend, and still highly approved of him.

It has been Dr. Franklin's great and, I might say, sole object since our arrival here, to raise an opinion that he only was the person confided in by his country, that he only had power in America and influence here, and that his will and word were sovereign. The receiving every application for recommendations to America, and giving them alone[1]; transacting the public business whenever it would contribute to this persuasion, though otherwise very neglectful of it; and making appointments sometimes of his sole authority, were the means by which he operated that end. The persons about him, countenanced and rewarded by contracts and opportunities of jobbing, were assiduous in the same line; and in depreciating my character as a person of neither influence, capacity, nor confidence. Dr. Franklin was the greatest politician in the world. This was their language, and they have boasted it was the opinion of this court.

I have reason to think they so far succeeded as effectually to depreciate the other Commissioners, because, since the conclusion of the treaty to this moment, their advice or opinion has never been asked in any one measure whatsoever. If the ministers consulted with Dr. Franklin, if deluded by these arts, believing in his pre-eminent knowledge, and the

[1] It is true he had good reason to believe that I should have refused to concur in those recommendations, which were generally an imposition on the person to whom they were given and the country to which they were sent. (A. L.)

insignificancy of the other Commissioners, they should have confined themselves to his advice, let the measures answer for the wisdom of the adviser. Either it is a false boast calculated to deceive our country, that the opinion of him is so high and his influence so great that he is consulted on all occasions, or else his advice has effected the shame and ruin of those who confided in him, for it is most certain that no nation ever lost so much credit and commerce in six months' time as this has done. And I think it would be easy to demonstrate that if Dr. Franklin's jealous and intolerant spirit, together with the artifices incessantly employed, had not incapacitated your other Commissioners from serving their country and the common cause by their advice and information, such measures would not have been adopted, nor any such misfortunes incurred. It has ever been the uniform tenor of my conduct to communicate to my colleagues whatever proposition was made to me, and consult them in every thing that concerned our joint operations. Their conduct towards me was generally the reverse. Even my separate transactions I constantly communicated to them, till I had reason to believe they were reported to Dr. Bancroft and sent to London for the bad purposes which Congress has seen in the affair of Mr. Wharton.

There was not any transaction of more delicacy, nor in which there was greater impropriety, in any one Commissioner undertaking to act secretly and alone, than that of propositions on the part of England. I was the first of the Commissioners to whom

they were made. Dr. Berkenhout was the English agent whose access to the English ministry I knew, and of whose good wishes for the liberties of America I had every reason to be persuaded that a long and uniform declaration of his sentiments could give. I did not hesitate a moment to communicate his letter to my colleagues and to the minister, and to answer by their advice. But when Mr. Paul Wentworth applied to Mr. Deane,[1] he was received and answered without any communication with me. When Mr. Pultney came from England for the same purpose, he was received and answered by Dr. Franklin without any communication with me. Either the jealousy of me, or some worse motives, prevailed upon them to incur the danger of transacting such business alone. The suspicions that might grow from it both in the minds of their countrymen and of this court, and the opportunity it gave to such agents to assert what they pleased as having passed,[2] would

[1] Hearing while I was in Spain that Mr. Paul Wentworth was in Holland, and very busy in getting intelligence for the ministry, I was apprehensive that Mr. Deane, not knowing him, and who by our arrangement I had reason to expect had gone thither, might be deceived by him. I therefore gave warning of it as follows in a letter to my colleagues, dated Vittoria in Spain, March 12, 1777: "If Mr. Deane goes to Amsterdam he is likely to meet with a Mr. Paul Wentworth, against whom I would wish to caution him." I afterwards explained Mr. Wentworth's character to Mr. Deane personally; he therefore knew with what kind of person he was conferring in private. (A. L.)

[2] In fact, Mr. Pultney on his return to London affirmed that Dr. Franklin had given the fullest approbation to the terms with which the Commissioners went over, and every one knows that Governor Johnston affirmed the same. Mr. Pultney is certainly a man of character and credit, and whether his assertion is true or not, it is certain that Dr. Franklin should not have given him an opportunity of making it. (A. L.)

have prevailed with them, unless some stronger motive operated to refuse any communication but in conjunction with all the Commissioners. It was the policy of the English agents to wish to take the Commissioners asunder and in secret, and therefore to make their applications separate. But both policy and honor called upon the Commissioners to act in concert. In obedience to this duty I not only communicated to them the former application to me alone, but have done the same lately with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams. Out of this confidence it was that Mr. Deane formed the whole of his accusations respecting my correspondence with Dr. Berkenhout, of which he would otherwise never have known. I can most truly affirm that I never consulted with or communicated any thing to Dr. Franklin or Mr. Deane which I have not had just reason to believe they turned in some such manner, whenever it was in their power, to my injury. The uses made of my memorial to the court of Spain, of my letter on the robbery at Berlin, of the overtures made through Dr. Berkenhout, of my letter on the 11th and 12th articles of the commercial treaty, are among many other irrefragable proofs of what I advance.

Far from having been ambitious of continuing in a Commission with such men, I not only meditated long ago to ask leave of resignation, but consulted my friends here upon the propriety of doing so. Nothing but the apprehension of the bad appearance it might have to the public, and the uneasiness it might give in Congress, prevented me from desiring

to be dismissed from a Commission with men, with whom, I have been long convinced, it was not for any man's honor or safety to serve.

With regard to the ostensible ground of Dr. Franklin's demand of all the papers in my possession, that there may be some among them which might assist him in carrying on the public business for the future, I have, agreeably to my promise to him, examined all my papers, and finding among them one account of Mr. Schweighauser which related to unsettled matters, I sent it to the Doctor immediately. But he never acknowledged the receipt of it, which is his constant practice when he means to reserve to himself the power of admitting or denying the receipt, as future events may render it politic. In such arts as these, and in them only, according to my best judgment, he shows himself a great politician, at least in the European estimation of that character. If in any thing else he is really so, I confess it is beyond my comprehension. Would to God he were in the truest sense of the word the greatest politician in Europe! Would to God he were the firmest patriot of the age, and that his talents had been employed with half the assiduity in promoting the cause of his country, that his wiles have been in weaving little plots, sowing pernicious dissensions, countenancing and covering the most corrupt and selfish use of all the opportunities which his station furnished!

ARTHUR LEE.

DCCXC

TO ARTHUR LEE

PASSY, 3 May, 1779.

SIR:—I did write to the gentlemen at Nantes concerned in fitting out the vessels for America, offering them the *Alliance* as a convoy, and ordered her to Nantes accordingly. They did not choose to accept that offer, knowing, as I suppose, her weakness, but sailed for Brest, to go with the French convoy, without waiting her arrival, and would probably have been gone long before she could have been fitted for sea, if contrary winds had not prevented. I wish your information were true, that she is manned and fit for such service; it must be from some person who is unacquainted with the facts, perhaps Mr. Ford.

I must suppose the merchants are satisfied with the convoy they have put their ships under, as I do not learn that they have applied for one more suitable. I would readily have solicited such an application if I had understood it to be necessary, being equally desirous with you of their arriving safe, and sensible of the importance of it. But I have not received a line from any of them to any such purpose; and Captain Landais has assured me that my supposition of his having men enough to fight his ship on occasion, in going home, though not enough to man prizes on a cruise, was a great mistake in my informer; he then wanted one hundred and fifty men, and I have not since heard of her having recruited more than forty, with the exchanged Americans from England. Mr.

Ford may probably be accommodated in the same frigate that will take Mr. Adams. I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—I am glad to hear from you that the supplies necessary for Virginia are shipped.

DCCXCI

TO THOMAS VINY

Passy, 4 May, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received with great pleasure your kind letter, as I learned by it that my hospitable friend still exists, and that his friendship for me has not abated.

We have had a hard struggle, but the Almighty has favored the just cause; and I join most heartily with you in your prayers that he may perfect his work and establish freedom in the New World as an asylum for those of the Old, who deserve it. I find that many worthy and wealthy families of this Continent are determined to remove thither and partake of it as soon as peace shall make the passage safer; for which peace I do also join your prayers most cordially, as I think the war a detestable one, and grieve much at the mischief and misery it occasions to many, my only consolation being that I did all in my power to prevent it.

When all the bustle is over, if my short remainder of life will permit my return thither, what a pleasure will it be to see my old friend and his children settled

there! I hope he will find vines and fig-trees there for all of them, under which we may sit and converse, enjoying peace and plenty, a good government, good laws, and liberty, without which men lose half their value. I am, with much esteem, dear friend, yours, etc. B. Franklin.

DCCXCII

TO MRS. PATIENCE WRIGHT [1]

Passy, 4 May, 1779.

Dear Madam:—I received your favor of the 14th of March past, and if you should continue in your resolution of returning to America, through France, I shall certainly render you any of the little services in my power; but there are so many difficulties at present in getting passages hence, particularly safe

[1] Mrs. Patience Wright was altogether a very extraordinary woman. She was the niece of the celebrated John Wesley, but was born at Philadelphia, in which city her parents settled at an early period. Mrs. Wright was greatly distinguished as a modeller in wax, which art she turned to a remarkable account in the American war by coming to England and exhibiting her performances. This enabled her to procure much intelligence of importance, which she communicated to Dr. Franklin and others, with whom she corresponded during the whole war. As soon as a general was appointed, or a squadron begun to be fitted out, the old lady found means of access to some family where she could gain information, and thus, without being at all suspected, she contrived to transmit an account of the number of the troops and the place of their destination to her political friends abroad. She at one time had frequent access to Buckingham House, and used, it was said, to speak her sentiments very freely to their Majesties, who were amused with her originality. The great Lord Chatham honored her with his visits, and she took his likeness, which appears in Westminster Abbey. Mrs. Wright died very old in February, 1786. —W. T. F.

ones for women, that methinks I should advise your stay till more settled times, and till a more frequent intercourse is established.

As to the exercise of your art here, I am in doubt whether it would answer your expectations. Here are two or three who profess it, and make a show of their works on the boulevards; but it is not the taste for persons of fashion to sit to these artists for their portraits, and both house-rent and living at Paris are very expensive.

I thought that friendship required I should acquaint you with these circumstances, after which you will use your discretion. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—My grandson, whom you may remember when a little saucy boy at school, being my amanuensis in writing the within letter, has been diverting me with his remarks. He conceives that your figures cannot be packed up without damage from any thing you could fill the boxes with to keep them steady. He supposes, therefore, that you must put them into post-chaises, two and two, which will make a long train upon the road, and be a very expensive conveyance; but, as they will eat nothing at the inns, you may the better afford it. When they come to Dover, he is sure they are so like life and nature, that the master of the packet will not receive them on board without passes, which you will do well, therefore, to take out from the Secretary's office before you leave London, where they will cost you *only* the modest price of two guineas and sixpence each,

which you will pay without grumbling, because you are sure the money will never be employed against your country. It will require, he says, five or six of the long wicker French stage-coaches to carry them as passengers from Calais to Paris, and a ship with good accommodations to convey them to America, where all the world will wonder at your clemency to Lord N——; that having it in your power to hang, or send him to the lighters, you had generously reprieved him for transportation.

DCCXCIII

TO DAVID HARTLEY

PASSY, 4 May, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I received your several favors, viz., one of April the 10th, one of the 20th, and two of the 22d, all on the same day, but by different conveyances.

I need not repeat what we have each of us so often repeated, the wish for peace. I will begin by frankly assuring you that, though I think a direct, immediate peace the best mode of present accommodation for Britain, as well as for America, yet if that *is not* at this time practicable, and a truce is practicable, I should not be against a truce; but this is merely on motives of *general humanity*, to obviate the evils men devilishly inflict on men in time of war, and to lessen as much as possible the similarity of earth and hell. For with regard to particular advantages respecting

the States I am connected with, I am persuaded it is theirs to continue the war till England shall be reduced to that perfect impotence of mischief which alone can prevail with her to let other nations enjoy "*Peace, Liberty, and Safety.*" I think, however, that a *short* truce, which must, therefore, be an *armed* truce, and put all parties to an almost equal expense with a continued war, is by no means desirable.

But this proposition of a truce, if made at all, should be made to France at the same time it is made to America. They have each of them too much honor, as well as too much sense, to listen separately to any propositions which tend to separate them from each other.

I will now give you my thoughts on your ideas of a negotiation in the order you have placed them. If you will number them in your copy you will readily see to which my observations refer, and I may therefore be the more concise.

To the 1st.—I do not see the necessity or use of five commissioners. A number of talkers lengthens discussions, and often embarrasses instead of aiding a settlement. Their different particular views, private interests, and jealousies of each other, are likewise so many rubs in the way, and it sometimes happens that a number cannot agree to what each privately thinks reasonable, and would have agreed to, or perhaps proposed, if alone. But this as the parties please.

To the 2d.—The term of twenty-one years would be better for all sides. The suspension of hostilities should be expressed to be between all parties at war;

and that the British troops and ships of war now in any of the United States be withdrawn.

To the 3d.—This seems needless, and is a thing that may be done or omitted as you please. America has no concern about those acts of Parliament.

To the 4th.—The reason of proposing this is not understood, nor the use of it, nor what inducement there can be for us to agree to it. When you come to treat with both your enemies you may negotiate away as much of these engagements as you can; but powers who have made a firm, solid league, evidently useful to both, can never be prevailed with to dissolve it for the vague expectation of another *in nubibus;* nor even on the certainty that another will be proposed without knowing what are to be its articles. America has no desire of being free from her engagements to France. The chief is, that of continuing the war in conjunction with her, and not making a separate peace, and this is an obligation not in the power of America to dissolve, being an obligation of *gratitude and justice* towards a nation which is engaged in a war on her account and for her protection, and would be forever binding, whether such an article existed or not in the treaty, and though it did not exist, an honest American would cut off his right hand rather than sign an agreement with England contrary to the spirit of it.

To the 5th.—As soon as you please.

If you had mentioned France in your proposed suspension of arms, I should have immediately shown it to the minister, and have endeavored to support that idea. As it stands, I am in doubt whether I shall

communicate your paper or not, though by your writing it so fair it seems as if you intended it. If I do, I shall acquaint you with the result.

The bill, of which you send me a copy, was an excellent one at the time, and might have had great and good effects, if, instead of telling us haughtily that our humble petition should receive no answer, the ministry had received and enacted that bill into a law. It might have erected a wall of brass round England, if such a measure had been adopted, when Friar Bacon's brazen head cried out, TIME IS! But the wisdom of it was not seen till after the fatal cry of TIME 'S PAST! I am, my dear friend, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCXCIV

TO —— LLOYD

PASSY, 4 May, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor to write me of the 10th past. As you seem to have some reliance on my advice in the affair you mention, I ought to give it candidly and sincerely. And it must, therefore, be, not to accept of the offer made you. If you carry your family to America, it is, I suppose, with the intention of spending the remainder of your days in your own country. This cannot be done happily without maintaining the general good opinion of your countrymen. Your entering by that door will unavoidably subject you to suspicions; those suspicions will render your

situation uncomfortable. I think, therefore, you had better conclude to stay where you are till peace, though under some present inconveniences. The circumstances of such a family will always justify this, wherever you shall arrive in America. Please to make my affectionate respects acceptable to your amiable lady, and believe me, with sincere esteem, dear sir, etc., etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCXCV

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 10 May, 1779.

SIR:—I received the honor of yours of the 29th past from Nantes. I hope you are before this time safely arrived at L'Orient. M. de la Luzerne is making diligent preparation for his departure, and you will soon see him. He and the secretary of the embassy are both very agreeable and sensible men, in whose conversation you will have a great deal of pleasure in your passage. What port the ships will be ordered to I have not yet learned. I suppose that may partly be left to the captain's discretion, as the winds may happen to serve. It must certainly be most agreeable to you to be landed in Boston, as that will give you an earlier sight of your family; but as you propose going immediately to Congress, being landed in Philadelphia will have some little advantage, as it saves half your journey. I shall take care to procure the order to the captain from M. Sartine which you desire, though I should suppose showing

the original letter of that minister, which you have, would be sufficient.

No public despatches are arrived here since you left us.

The anniversary of the signing of the treaty was observed with great festivity by the Congress at Philadelphia. From Holland I have just received the resolution of the States-General of the 26th, to convoy their trade, notwithstanding Sir Joseph York's memorial, and to fit out directly thirty-two ships of war for that purpose, which is good news, and may have consequences.

I have the honor to be, with great regard, sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCXCVI

TO GENERAL BECKWITH

Passy, 17 May, 1779.

Sir:—Having assured you verbally that I had no authority to treat or agree with any military person of any rank whatever, to go to America, I understand your expression, that "*you will take your chance if I think you may be useful*," to mean, that you will go over without making any terms with me, on a supposition, which you also mention, that my recommendation will be regarded by the Congress, and that you shall thereupon be employed in our armies.

Whoever has seen the high character given of you by Prince Ferdinand (under whom you served) to

Lord Chatham, which I saw when in London, must think that so able an officer might have been exceedingly useful to our cause, if he had been in America at the beginning of the war. But there is a great difficulty at this time in introducing one of your rank into our armies, now that they are all arranged and fully officered; and this kind of difficulty has been found so great, and the Congress has been so embarrassed with numbers of officers from other countries, who arrived under strong recommendations, that they have been at above one hundred thousand livres' expense to pay the charges of such officers in coming to America and returning to Europe, rather than hazard the discontent the placing them, to the prejudice of our own officers who had served from the beginning, would have occasioned.

Under these circumstances they have not merely left me without authority, but they have in express terms forbidden me to agree with or encourage by any means the going over of officers to America in expectation of employment. As to my recommendation, whatever weight it might have had formerly, it has in several instances been so improperly employed through the too great confidence I had in recommendations from others, that I think it would at present be of no importance, if it were necessary; but after that above mentioned of so great a general and so good a judge of military merit as Prince Ferdinand, a character of you from me would be impertinence.

Upon the whole, I can only say that, if you choose to go over and settle in our land of liberty, I shall be

glad to find you there on my return as a fellow-citizen, because I believe you will be a very good one, and respected there as such by the people. But I cannot advise or countenance your going thither with the expectation you mention. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCXCVII

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Passy, 26 May, 1779.

Gentlemen:—The Marquis de Lafayette, who arrived here the 11th of February, brought me yours of October 28th, and the new commission, credentials, and instructions which the Congress have honored me with. I have not since had an opportunity of writing, that I could trust; for I see, by several instances, the orders given to private captains to throw their despatches into the sea, when likely to be taken, are sometimes neglected, and sometimes so badly executed that the letters are recovered by the enemy, and much inconvenience has attended their interception. You mention that you should speedily have opportunities of forwarding duplicates and triplicates of the papers; none of them has ever come to hand, nor have I received any other line from you of later date.

I immediately acquainted the minister of foreign affairs with my appointment, and communicated to him, as usual, a copy of my credential letter, on which

a day was named for my reception. A fit of the gout prevented my attendance at that time, and for some weeks after; but as soon as I was able to go through the ceremony, I went to Versailles, and was presented to the king, and received in all the forms. I delivered the letter of Congress into his Majesty's own hands, who in the most gracious manner expressed his satisfaction. And I have since constantly attended the levee every Tuesday, with the other foreign ministers, and have taken every proper occasion of repeating the assurances I am instructed to give of the grateful sentiments of Congress, and their determined resolution to fulfil religiously their engagements. Much pains is constantly taken by the enemy to weaken the confidence of this court in their new allies, by representing our people as weary of the war, and of the government of Congress; which body, too, they represent as distracted by dissensions, etc.; but all this has very little effect; and when on some occasion it has seemed to make a little impression, and create some apprehensions, I have not found it difficult to remove them. And it is my firm opinion that, notwithstanding the great losses suffered by the commerce of this kingdom since the commencement of the war, the disposition of the court to continue it (till its purpose of establishing our independence is completed) is not the least changed, nor their regard for us diminished.

The end of that part of the instructions which relates to American seamen taken by the French in English ships had already been obtained, Captain Jones having had for some time an order from court,

directed to the keepers of the prisoners, requiring them to deliver to him such Americans as should be found in their hands, that they might be at liberty to serve under his command. Most of them have accordingly been delivered to him, if not all. The minister of the marine, having entertained a high opinion of him, from his conduct and bravery in taking the *Drake*, was desirous of employing him in the command of a particular enterprise, and to that end requested us to spare him, which we did, and sent the *Ranger* home under the command of his lieutenant. Various accidents have hitherto postponed his equipment, but he now has the command of a fifty-gun ship with some frigates, all under American commissions and colors, fitted out at the king's expense, and will sail, it is said, about the 1st of June.

The Marquis de Lafayette was, with some land troops, to have gone with him; but I now understand the Marquis is not to go, the plan being a little changed.

The *Alliance* being weakly manned at first, and the captain judging it necessary to be freed from thirty-eight of his men, who had been concerned in a conspiracy, and unwilling to take French seamen, I thought it best to send him directly home, as his ship might be of some protection to the vessels then about sailing to America, and Mr. Adams, who was desirous of returning soon, might be accommodated with a passage in a swift-sailing vessel. I accordingly offered her as a convoy to the trade at Nantes; but the gentlemen concerned did not think fit to wait for getting ready, as a French convoy offered, for at least

part of the voyage, and, the minister requesting she might be added to Captain Jones' little squadron, and offering to give a passage to Mr. Adams in the frigate with the new ambassador, and to complete the *Alliance's* complement of men, I thought it best to continue her a little longer in Europe, hoping she may, in the projected cruise, by her extraordinary swiftness, be a means of taking prisoners enough to redeem the rest of our countrymen now in the English gaols. With this view, as well as to oblige the minister, I ordered her to join Captain Jones at L'Orient, and obey his orders, where she is now accordingly.

There have been great misunderstandings between the officers of that ship and their captain, and great discontents among the men for want of clothes and money. I have been obliged to make great advances to appease those discontents, and I now hope the authority and prudence of Captain Jones will be able to remove, or at least to prevent, the ill effects of those misunderstandings. The conspirators are detained in prison, and will remain there, subject to such directions as Congress may think fit to give concerning them. The courts here would not, because they properly could not, undertake to try them, and we had not captains enough to make a court-martial for the purpose. The sending them to America, with evidence to convict them, will be a great trouble and expense, and perhaps their offence cannot be so clearly made out as to justify a punishment sufficient to deter by its exemplary severity. Possibly the best use that can be made of them is to give them in exchange for as many Americans in the cartel now

operating here. The perfidious conduct of the English and Scotch sailors in our service a good deal discourages the idea of taking them out of those prisons in order to employ them.

This cartel is at length brought about by the indefatigable endeavors of an old friend of mine and a long-declared one to America, Mr. Hartley, member of Parliament for Hull. The ship employed has already brought us one cargo from the prison at Plymouth. The number was intended for a hundred, but proved ninety-seven, and she is returned with as many in exchange, to bring us a second number from the prison at Portsmouth. This is to continue till all are exchanged. The Americans are chiefly engaged with Captains Jones and Landais. The exchange is the more remarkable, as our people were all committed as for high treason.

Agreeably to the seventh instruction, I have earnestly recommended the reduction of Halifax and Quebec. The Marquis de Lafayette joined me warmly in the application for this purpose, and I hope we shall in due time see some good effects from it. I have also in various ways, and through different channels, laid before the ministry the distressed state of our finances in America. There seems a great willingness in all of them to help us, except in the controller, M. Necker, who is said not to be well disposed towards us, and is supposed to embarrass every measure proposed to relieve us by grants of money. It is certain that under the resolution, perhaps too hastily declared, of the king's imposing no new taxes on his subjects for this year, the court has

great difficulties in defraying present expense, the vast exertions to put the navy in a condition to equal that of England having cost immense sums.

There is also a prevailing opinion that the most effectual service to us is to be expected from rendering their marine superior to that of England. The king has, however, to encourage our loan in Holland, been so good as to engage, under his hand, to be security for our payment of the interest of three millions of livres: but that loan has not yet amounted to more than about eighty thousand florins. Dr. Price, whose assistance was requested by Congress, has declined that service, as you will see by the copy of his letter enclosed.[1] To me it seems that the measure recommended by the wisdom of Congress, for diminishing the quantity of paper by taxes of large nominal sums, must have very salutary effects.

As to your finances here, it is fit that you should know the state of them. When the Commissioners of Congress made the proposition of paying the interest at Paris of the money borrowed in America, they understood the loan to be of five millions of dollars. They obtained from government sums more than

[1] Congress had passed the following resolution October 6, 1778:

"*Resolved*, That the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, or any of them, be directed forthwith to apply to Dr. Price, and inform him that it is the desire of Congress to consider him a citizen of the United States, and to receive his assistance in regulating their finances. That if he shall think it expedient to remove with his family to America, and afford such assistance, a generous provision shall be made for requiting his services."

The Commissioners forwarded this resolve to Dr. Price, who replied as follows:

"Dr. Price returns his best thanks to the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, for conveying to him the

sufficient for the interests of such a sum. That sum has been increased; and, if they could otherwise have provided for it, they have been from time to time drained by a number of unforeseen expenses, of which the Congress had no knowledge, and of others occasioned by their orders and drafts; and the cargoes sent to the Commissioners by the Committee have some of them been treacherously run away with by the seamen, or taken by the enemy, or, when arrived, have been hitherto applied toward the payment of debts, the tobaccos to the farmers-general according to contract, and the rice and indigo to Messrs. Hortalez & Co., from whom, by the way, we have not yet been able to procure any account.

I have lately employed an accountant, the son of our banker, to form complete books of our accounts, to be sent to Congress. They are not yet ready. When they are I shall send them by the first safe opportunity. In the meantime, I may just mention some particulars of our disbursements. Great quantities of clothing, arms, ammunition, and naval

resolution of Congress of the 6th of October last, by which he is invited to become a member of the United States, and to give his assistance in regulating their finances. It is not possible for him to express the sense he has of the honor which this resolution does him, and the satisfaction with which he reflects on the favorable opinion of him which has occasioned it. But he knows himself not to be sufficiently qualified for giving such assistance; and he is so connected in this country, and also advancing so fast in the evening of life, that he cannot think of a removal. He requests the favor of the Honorable Commissioners to transmit this reply to Congress, with assurances that Dr. Price feels the warmest gratitude for the notice taken of him, and that he looks to the American States, as *now* the hope, and likely *soon* to become the refuge, of mankind."—London, January 18, 1779.

stores, sent from time to time; payment of bills from Mr. Bingham, one hundred thousand livres; Congress bills in favor of Haywood & Co., above two hundred thousand; advanced to Mr. Ross, about twenty thousand pounds sterling; paid Congress drafts in favor of returned officers, ninety-three thousand and eighty livres; to our prisoners in England, and after their escape to help them home, and to other Americans here in distress, a great sum, I cannot at present say how much; supplies to Mr. Hodge for fitting out Captain Conyngham, very considerable; for the freight of ships to carry over the supplies, great sums; to Mr. William Lee and Mr. Izard, five thousand five hundred pounds sterling; and for fitting the frigates *Raleigh*, *Alfred*, *Boston*, *Providence*, *Alliance*, *Ranger*, etc., I imagine not less than sixty or seventy thousand livres each, taken one with another; and for the maintenance of the English prisoners, I believe when I get in all the accounts I shall find one hundred thousand livres not sufficient, having already paid above sixty-five thousand on that article. And now, the drafts of the treasurer of the loans coming very fast upon me, the anxiety I have suffered, and the distress of mind lest I should not be able to pay them, have for a long time been very great indeed.

To apply again to this court for money for a particular purpose, which they had already over and over again provided for and furnished us, was extremely awkward. I therefore repeated the *general* applications, which we had made when together, for aids of money, and received the general answers, that

the expense of government for the navy was so great, that at present it was exceedingly difficult to furnish the necessary supplies; that France, by sending a fleet to America, obliged the enemy to divide their forces, and left them so weak on the continent, as to aid us by lessening our expense, if it could not by giving us money, etc., etc.; and I was asked if we did not receive money from Spain. I know, indeed, of some money received from thence, and I have heard of more, but know not how much; Mr. Arthur Lee, as Minister for Spain, having taken to himself all the management of that affair, and will account to Congress. I only understand that there is none of it left to assist in paying Congress bills.

I at length obtained, as above mentioned, the king's *bon* for payment of the interest of three millions, if I could borrow it in Holland, or elsewhere; but though two eminent houses in Amsterdam have undertaken it and had hopes of success, they have both lately written to me, that the great demands of money for Germany and for England had raised interest above our limits, and that the successes of the English in Georgia and St. Lucia, and in destroying the French trade, with the supposed divisions in Congress, all much magnified by the British minister, and the pressing application to borrow by several of our States separately, had made the moneyed people doubtful of our stability, as well as our ability to repay what might be lent us, and that it was necessary to wait a more favorable moment for proceeding with our loan.

In this situation I have been applied to by Mr

William Lee, and lately, through our banker, by Mr. Izard, for more money for their expenses; and, I am told, there is much anger against me for declining to furnish them, and that I am charged with *disobeying an order of Congress*,[1] and with cruelly attempting to distress gentlemen who are in the service of their country. They have, indeed, produced to me a resolve of Congress, *empowering them to draw* on the Commissioners in France for their expenses at foreign courts; and doubtless Congress, when that resolve was made, intended to enable us to pay those drafts; but as that has not been done, and the gentlemen (except Mr. Lee for a few weeks) have not incurred any expense at foreign courts, and, if they had, the five thousand five hundred guineas, received by them in about nine months, seemed an ample provision for it, and as both of them might command money from England, I do not conceive that I *disobeyed an order* of Congress, and that if I did, the circumstances will excuse it; and I could have no intention to distress them, because I must know it is out of my power, as their private fortunes and credit will enable them at all times to pay their own expenses.

In short, the dreadful consequences of ruin to our public credit, both in America and Europe, that must attend protesting a single Congress draft for interest, after our funds were out, would have weighed with me against the payment of more money to those gentlemen, if the demand had otherwise been well founded. I am, however, in the judgment of Con-

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. II., p. 446.

gress; and, if I have done amiss, must submit dutifully to their censure. Thanks to God, I have this last week got over the difficulty, so far as relates to the bills, which will all be punctually paid; but if the Navy Board sends more ships here to be fitted, or the Congress continue to draw for the payment of other debts, the ships will be disappointed, and I shall probably be made a bankrupt, unless funds are at the same time sent over to discharge such demands.

With regard to the fitting out of ships receiving and disposing of cargoes, and purchasing of supplies, I beg leave to mention that, besides my being wholly unacquainted with such business, the distance I am from the ports renders my having any thing to do with it extremely inconvenient. Commercial agents have indeed been appointed by Mr. William Lee; but they and the captains are continually writing for my opinion or orders, or leave to do this or that, by which much time is lost to them, and much of mine is taken up to little purpose, from my ignorance. I see clearly, however, that many of the captains are exorbitant in their demands, and in some cases I think those demands are too easily complied with by the agents, perhaps because the commissions are in proportion to the expense. I wish, therefore, the Congress would appoint the consuls they have a right to appoint by the treaty, and put into their hands all that sort of employment. I have in my desk, I suppose, not less than fifty applications from different ports, praying the appointment, and offering to serve gratis for the honor of

it, and the advantage it gives in trade; but I imagine that if consuls are appointed they will be of our own people from America, who, if they should make fortunes abroad, might return with them to their country.

The commissions demanded by the agents seem to me in some cases very high. For instance, Mr. Schweighauser, in a late account, charges five per cent. on the simple delivery of the tobaccos to the officer of the farmers-general in the port, and by that means makes the commission on the delivery of the two last cargoes amount to about six hundred and thirty pounds sterling. As there was no sale in the case, he has, in order to calculate the commission, valued the tobacco at ninety livres the hundredweight; whereas it was, by our contract with the farmers, to be delivered at about forty livres. I got a friend, who was going upon change, to inquire among the merchants what was the custom in such cases of delivery. I send enclosed the result he has given me of his inquiries. In consequence, I have refused to pay the commission of five per cent. on this article; and I know not why it was, as is said, agreed with him at the time of his appointment, that he should have five per cent. on his transactions, if the custom is only two per cent., as by my information.

I have mentioned above the applications of separate States to borrow money in Europe, on which I beg leave to remark that, when the General Congress are endeavoring to obtain a loan, these separate attempts interfere, and are extremely inconvenient,

especially where some of the agents are empowered to offer a higher interest, and some have powers in that respect unlimited. We have likewise lately had applications from three several States to this court, to be furnished with great quantities of arms, ammunition, and clothing, or with money upon credit to buy them, and from one State to be supplied with naval stores and ships of war. These agents, finding that they had not interest to obtain such grants, have severally applied to me, and seem to think it my duty as Minister for the United States to support and enforce their particular demands. I have endeavored to do so; but I find the ministers do not like these separate applications, and seem to think that they should properly come only through Congress, to whom the several States in such cases ought first to make known their wants, and then the Congress could instruct their minister accordingly. This would save the king's ministers a great deal of trouble, and the several States the expense of these particular agents; concerning whom I would add a little remark, that we have in America, too readily, in various instances, given faith to the pretensions of strangers from Europe, who offer their services as persons who have powerful friends and great interest in their own country, and by that means obtain contracts, orders, or commissions to procure what we want, and who, when they come here, are totally unknown, and have no other credit but what such commissions give them, or, if known, the commissions do not add so much to their credit as they diminish that of their employers.

I have received two letters from a Frenchman settled in one of the ports of Barbary, offering himself to act as our minister with the emperor, with whom he pretended to be intimate, and acquainting me that his Imperial Majesty wondered we had never sent to thank him for being the first power on this side of the Atlantic that had acknowledged our independence, and opened his ports to us, advising that we should send the emperor a present. On inquiry at the office in whose department Africa is included, I learned the character of this man to be such that it was not safe to have any correspondence with him, and therefore I did not answer his letters. I suppose Congress has received the memorial we presented to this court respecting the Barbary States, and requesting the king's good offices with them, agreeably to the treaty, and also the answer expressing the king's readiness to perform those good offices whenever the Congress should send us instructions and make provision for the necessary presents[1]; or, if those papers have not yet got to hand, they will be found among the copies carried over by Mr. Adams, and therefore I only mention them by way of remembrance. Whenever a treaty with the emperor is intended, I suppose some of our naval stores will be an acceptable present, and the expectation of continued supplies of such stores a powerful motive for entering into and continuing a friendship.

I should send you copies of several other memorials and public papers; but, as Mr. Adams goes in the same ship, and has the whole of our transactions

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. I., pp. 431, 453, 462.

during his time, it is not so necessary by this vessel. The disposition of this nation in general continues friendly towards us and our cause, and I do not see the least diminution of it, except among the West India merchants and planters, whose losses have rendered them a little discontented. Spain has been long acting as a mediator, but arming all the time most vigorously. Her naval force is now very great indeed, and as her last proposition of a long truce, in which America should be included and treated as independent in fact, though not expressly acknowledged as such, has been lately rejected by England, it is now thought that her open junction with France in the war is not far distant.

The Commissioners here have a power in general terms to treat of peace, friendship, and commerce with European States, but I apprehend this is scarce explicit enough to authorize me to treat of such a truce, if the proposition should again come upon the *tapis*. I therefore wish the Congress to consider of it, and give such powers as may be necessary to whom they may think proper, that if a favorable opportunity of making an advantageous treaty should offer, it may not be missed.

Admiral Arbuthnot, who was going to America with a large convoy and some troops, has been detained by a little attempt upon Jersey; and contrary winds, since that affair was over, have detained him further, till within these few days.

Since I began writing this letter, I have received a packet from the Committee, by way of Eustatia and Holland, sent by Mr. Lovell, containing his letters of

December the 8th, January the 29th, and February the 8th, with one from the President, dated January the 3d. Several papers are mentioned as sent with them, and by other opportunities, but none are come to hand, except the resolution to postpone the attempt on Canada; and these are the first despatches received here since the date of those sent by the Marquis de Lafayette. I have just received a letter from Mr. Bingham, acquainting me that the ship *Deane*, and the *General Gates*, are just arrived at Martinique, and apply to him to be careened, refitted, and procure a fresh supply of provisions; and that, though he has no orders, he must draw upon me for the expense. I think it right to acquaint you thus early that I shall be obliged to protest his bills.

I have just obtained from his Majesty orders to the government of Guadaloupe, to make reasonable reparation to Captain Giddens of Newbury for the loss of his vessel, sunk in mistake by a battery of that island. Great preparations are making here, with much activity in all the seaports, taking up transports, and building small vessels, proper for the landing of troops, etc.; so that many think an invasion of England or Ireland is intended. The intention, whatever it is, may change, but the opinion of such an intention, which seems to prevail in England, may tend to keep their troops and ships at home.

General and Lord Howe, Generals Cornwallis and Grey, Colonel Montresor, and Captain Hammond, and others, have formally given it as their opinion in Parliament, that the conquest of America is im-

practicable. This week, as we hear, John Maxwell, Joseph Galloway, Andrew Allen, John Patterson, Theophilus Morris, Enoch Story, and Jabez Fisher, are to be examined to prove the contrary. One would think the first set were likely to be the best judges.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to the Congress, and assure them of my most faithful services. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCXCVIII

TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

Passy, 27 May, 1779.

Sir:—I should sooner have sent this passport, but that I hoped to have had the other from this court in time to send with it. If you should stay a few days in England, and will let me know how it may be directed to you, I can send it to you per post.

I received some time since a letter from a person at Belfast, informing me that a great number of people in those parts were desirous of going to settle in America, if passports could be obtained for them and their effects, and referring me to you for future information. I shall always be ready to afford every assistance and security in my power to such undertakings, when they are really meant, and are not merely schemes of trade with views of introducing English manufactures into America, under pretence of their being the substance of persons going there to settle.

I admire the spirit with which I see the Irish are at length determined to claim some share of that freedom of commerce which is the right of all mankind, but which they have been so long deprived of by the abominable selfishness of their fellow-subjects. To enjoy all the advantages of the climate, soil, and situation in which God and nature have placed us, is as clear a right as that of breathing, and can never be justly taken from men but as a punishment for some atrocious crime.

The English have long seemed to think it a right which none could have but themselves. Their injustice has already cost them dear, and, if persisted in, will be their ruin. I have the honor to be, with great esteem, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCXCIX

TO —— ——

June 1, 1779.

The refusal of the Director-General to accede to the proposition of Mr. Franklin and his pressing needs determine him, that he may have nothing wherewithal to reproach himself if the events follow which he apprehends, to renew his appeal to the administration. To avoid them, therefore, he asks one million as a loan. Although this sum will not suffice for his necessities, he hopes that before it will be all used he will receive other supplies, either from America or by borrowing, for which he has authority,

and for which he has caused to be printed the promissory notes of the thirteen States, reimbursable in ten years at Paris, with annual interest. He offers these notes at par, and if the administration fails to realize on them before they fall due, he engages to take them up with the first funds which he shall have available for that purpose.

Although by this arrangement the operation appears more like an investment than a benefaction, Mr. Franklin will none the less appreciate the service which will be rendered, and which, he may add, the interest of the two nations makes a necessity to-day, if they would not expose themselves to lose the fruit of their union. B. Franklin.[1]

DCCC

TO JAMES LOVELL

Passy, 2 June, 1779.

Sir:—I received a few days since, *via* Eustatia and Holland, the triplicates of your several favors of December the 8th, January the 29th, and February the 8th. The preceding copies of the same dates never came to hand. I thank you very much for the newspapers, though the disputes I see in them give me pain. You observe rightly, that the want of good

[1] It does not appear to whom this note was addressed, but probably to M. Vergennes. It is copied from the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères*, at Paris, from which copy it is translated. The copy is endorsed as follows: "Enclosing blank promissory note with coupons."—Editor.

conveyances obstructs much the punctuality of your correspondence. The number of long letters I have written to America has almost discouraged me from writing, except by such an opportunity as this. You may judge of the uncertainty of your letters getting to hand, when I tell you that though you mention having sent me quadruplicates of my credentials, only those by the Marquis de Lafayette have yet appeared.

I am glad to understand that you are taking measures to restore the value of your money, by taxing largely to reduce the quantity. I believe no financier in the world can put you upon a more effectual method. The English have had a little flow of spirits lately, from their success against the trade of France, and the news of the imagined conquest of Georgia; but the growing apprehension of a war with Spain also begins to sober them, and, like people who have been drunk with drams, they now seem to have both the head- and the heart-ache. The late letters from thence are in a more humble style, and some printed papers of the last post, known to be ministerial, appear intended to prepare the minds of the people for propositions of peace. But these ebbs and flows are common with them, and the duration of neither is to be relied on.

As I do not find by any of yours that a long letter of mine to you in July last has come to hand, I send you herewith a copy of it (though now a little stale), as it serves to show my continued good opinion of a gentleman who, by the papers you have sent me, seems to be hardly used. I have never meddled with

the dispute between him and Mr. Lee, but the suspicion of having a good-will to him has drawn upon me a great deal of ill-will from his antagonists. The Congress have wisely enjoined the ministers in Europe to agree with one another. I had always resolved to have no quarrel, and have therefore made it a constant rule to answer no angry, affronting, or abusive letters, of which I have received many, and long ones, from Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard, who, I understand, and see indeed by the papers, have been writing liberally, or rather illiberally, against me, to prevent, as one of them says here, any impressions my writings against them might occasion to their prejudice; but I have never before mentioned them in any of my letters.

Our scheme here for packet-boats did not continue.[1] I wish Congress could fall upon some method of sending some little light vessels once a month, to keep up a correspondence more regular. Even the receiving of letters of a certain date, though otherwise of no importance, might serve to refute the false news of our adversaries on both sides of the water, which have sometimes too long their intended effect before the truth arrives. I see that frequently little pilot-boats, of twenty-five or thirty tons' burden, arrive safe from Virginia; the expense of such would not be great.

I beg leave to recommend earnestly to your civilities M. le Chevalier de la Luzerne, who goes over to succeed M. Gérard, as the king's minister to the Congress. He bears here a most amiable character, has

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. I., p. 284.

great connections, and is a hearty friend to the American cause. With great esteem, I am, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCI

TO HORATIO GATES [1]

Passy, June 2, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received your obliging letter by the Chevalier de Raymondis, who appears extremely sensible of the civilities he received at Boston, and very desirous of being serviceable to the American cause. His wound is not yet right, as he tells me there is a part of the bone still to be cut off. But he is otherwise well and cheerful, and has a great respect for you.

The pride of England was never so humbled by any thing as by your capitulation of Saratoga. They have not yet got over it, though a little elevated this spring by their success against the French commerce. But the growing apprehension of having Spain too upon their hands has lately brought them down to an humble seriousness, that begins to appear even in ministerial discourses, and the papers of ministerial writers. All the happy effects of that transaction for America are not generally known. I may some time or other acquaint the world with some of them. When shall we meet again in cheerful converse, talk over our adventures, and finish with a quiet game of chess?

[1] At this time Major-General in the American army.

The little dissensions between particular States in America are much magnified in England, and they once had great hopes from them. I consider them, with you, as the effects of apparent security; which do not affect the grand points of independence, and adherence to treaties; and which will vanish at a renewed appearance of danger. This court continues heartily our friend, and the whole nation are warm in our favor; excepting only a few West Indians, and merchants in that trade, whose losses make them a little uneasy. With sincere and great esteem and affection, I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCII

TO THE MARINE COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS

2 June, 1779.

Gentlemen:—I received the honor of yours by the Marquis de Lafayette, who arrived safe and well in the *Alliance* frigate, which you were pleased to put under my orders.

There had been a conspiracy on board to seize and run away with the ship to England. Thirty-eight of the crew concerned in the plot were brought in under confinement, and the captain was much embarrassed with them, and suspicious of many more. We could not try them here for want of officers sufficient to make a court-martial. The French Admiralty could not take cognizance of their offence. The captain objected to carrying them back, as both

troublesome and dangerous. In fine we got leave to land and confine them in a French prison, where they continue till further orders.

Captain Landais desired much to have his ship sheathed here with copper, but having neither orders nor money in my hands for that purpose, I was obliged to refuse it. There was a great misunderstanding between him and his officers, and a great discontent among the officers themselves, who were in want of clothing and money; the ship, too, though new, wanted great repairs, all her iron work being bad. The agent, Mr. Schweighauser, required my orders about every thing, and I had letters from him, from the officers, or from the captain by almost every post. My total unacquaintance with such business made it very perplexing to me. I have got it through at last, and I hear the officers are more contented, but I hope to have no more such affairs on my hands. Being informed by the officer who came up from the captain with the despatches, that he had not hands sufficient to man prizes if she should be sent on a cruise; that the captain did not care to supply the deficiency with Frenchmen; that if she were again at Boston, now that her character for a swift sailer, and that of the captain for a good officer, were established, of which the seamen were before doubtful, there was the greatest probability that she would be fully manned immediately; and as Mr. Adams wished for an opportunity of going home, and I heard that some ships were bound to North America from Nantes, to whom the convoy of a frigate quite to the American coast might be convenient, I determined

to send her back directly, and accordingly offered her as a convoy to the trade. But as M. de la Motte Picquet was about to sail from Brest with a squadron before our frigate could be fitted, and as he offered to take care of all outward-bound ships who should join him at Brest, the offer I made was not accepted. All the American ships went from Nantes to join his fleet. She was, however, still to go with Mr. Adams, but receiving the enclosed letter from M. de Sartine, Minister of the Marine, who at the same time offered to man her completely if I complied with his request, I thought it right to oblige him, as the inconvenience would be only a little longer delay to Mr. Adams in getting home, and by her extremely swift sailing, of which they relate wonders, she might in the proposed cruise take prisoners enough to redeem by the now established cartel the rest of our unfortunate countrymen still in the English prisons. I accordingly acquainted M. de Sartine that I would, agreeable to his desire, order her to L'Orient, where she now is, a part of Capt. Jones' little squadron, which is ready to sail, if not already sailed, on the intended expedition.

After all this was thus arranged, Mr. Arthur Lee wrote to me to urge the sending her with the merchant-ships, and to carry over some despatches of his and Mr. Izard's that were of great importance, but as those ships were by this time sailed, and the French frigate with the new minister and Mr. Adams was to sail in a week or two, and might carry those despatches, the contents of which I was not acquainted with, I did not see the necessity of retracting the

promise I had made to the minister, and thereby deranging the expedition.

As our ships of war that arrive here require an amazing expense to outfit them, and the prizes they bring in often occasion lawsuits and all the embarrassment and solicitation and vexation attending suits in this country, I must beg the Committee would be so good as to order the several navy boards to send no more to be outfitted here, without sending effects to defray the expense, and that if our armed ships should be still ordered to cruise in these seas, a consul or consuls may be appointed in the several seaports, who will thereby be more at hand to transact maritime business expeditiously, will understand it better, relieve your minister at this court from a great deal of trouble, and leave him at liberty to attend affairs of more general importance.

With great esteem and respect, I have the honor, gentlemen, to be your most obedient and most humble servant, B. Franklin.

DCCCIII

TO RICHARD BACHE

Passy, 2 June, 1779.

—— I am very easy about the efforts Messrs. L——[1] and ——[2] are using, as you tell me, to injure me on that side of the water. I trust in the justice of the Congress that they will listen to no accusations against me that I have not first been acquainted

[1] Lee. [2] Izard doubtless.

with, and had an opportunity of answering. I know those gentlemen have plenty of ill-will to me, though I have never done to either of them the smallest injury, or given the least just cause of offence. But my too great reputation, and the general good-will this people have for me, and the respect they show me, and even the compliments they make me, all grieve those unhappy gentlemen; unhappy indeed in their tempers, and in the dark, uncomfortable passions of jealousy, anger, suspicion, envy, and malice. It is enough for good minds to be affected at other people's misfortunes; but they that are vexed at everybody's good-luck can never be happy. I take no other revenge of such enemies than to let them remain in the miserable situation in which their malignant natures have placed them, by endeavoring to support an estimable character, and thus, by continuing the reputation the world has hitherto indulged me with, I shall continue them in their present state of damnation, and I am not disposed to reverse my conduct for the alleviation of their torments.

I am surprised to hear that my grandson, Temple Franklin, being with me, should be an objection against me, and that there is a cabal for removing him. Methinks it is rather some merit that I have rescued a valuable young man from the danger of being a Tory, and fixed him in honest republican Whig principles; as I think, from the integrity of his disposition, his industry, his early sagacity, and uncommon abilities for business, he may in time become of great service to his country. It is enough

that I have lost my *son;* would they add my *grandson?* An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of the Congress, and for the public service, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me, and if I die, I have a child to close my eyes and take care of my remains. His dutiful behavior towards me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me. His conduct, as my private secretary, has been unexceptionable, and I am confident the Congress will never think of separating us.

I have had a great deal of pleasure in Ben too.[1] He is a good, honest lad, and will make, I think, a valuable man. He had made as much proficiency in his learning as the boarding-school he was at could well afford him; and after some consideration, where to find a better for him, I at length fixed on sending him to Geneva. I had a good opportunity by a gentleman of that city, who had a place for him in his chaise, and has a son about the same age at the same school. He promised to take care of him, and enclosed I send you the letters I have since received relating to him and from him. He went very cheerfully, and I understand is very happy. I miss his company on Sundays at dinner. But, if I live, and I can find a little leisure, I shall make the journey next spring to see him, and to see at the same time *the old thirteen United States* of Switzerland.

Thanks be to God, I continue well and hearty.

[1] Mr. Bache's eldest son.

Undoubtedly I grow older, but I think the last ten years have made no great difference. I have sometimes the gout, but they say that is not so much a disease as a remedy. God bless you. I am your affectionate father,

B. Franklin.

DCCCIV

TO CHARLES CARROLL, ESQ., OF CARROLLTON

Passy, 2 June, 1779.

Dear Sir:—This will be delivered to you by the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who succeeds M. Gérard. He is a gentleman of a most amiable character here, and a sincere well-wisher to America. As such I beg leave to recommend him to your civilities. You must have heard much of M. de Malesherbes, son of the Chancellor Lamoignon, and late President of the *Cour des Aides*, famous for his eloquent, free, and strong remonstrances to the late king. This gentleman is his nephew.

Correspondence between friends in America and Europe is now miserably cut to pieces by the captures of vessels. When one writes and the letters do not get to hand, or if they get to hand the answers miscarry, by degrees we may come to forget one another. But I shall never forget the pleasure I had in your company on our journey to Canada. Please to remember me when you write to your other *compagnons de voyage*, and believe me ever, with sincere esteem and affection, dear sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

P. S. to Mr. Carroll's letter.

In looking over a letter you favored me with, dated August 12, 1777, and which gave me great satisfaction at the time, I find one passage which I did not then answer. It relates to the sending over artificers of various kinds. You can have no conception of the numbers that apply to me with that view, and who would go over if I could assist them by obtaining a passage for them without expense. If this should be thought useful, and Congress could afford the charge, and could confide in my judgment of the persons and knowledge of the arts wanted among us, I am persuaded I could send you over many people who would be valuable acquisitions to our country.

DCCCV

TO MRS. SARAH BACHE

Passy, 3 June, 1779.

Dear Sally:—I have before me your letters of October 22d and January 17th. They are the only ones I received from you in the course of eighteen months. If you knew how happy your letters make me, and consider how many miscarry, I think you would write oftener.

I am much obliged to the Miss Cliftons for the kind care they took of my house and furniture. Present my thankful acknowledgments to them, and tell them I wish them all sorts of happiness.

The clay medallion of me you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France.

A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in the lids of snuff boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints (of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere), have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon, so that he durst not do any thing that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it. It is said by learned etymologists that the name *doll*, for the images children play with, is derived from the word IDOL. From the number of *dolls* now made of him, he may be truly said, *in that sense*, to be *i-doll-ized* in this country.

I think you did right to stay out of town till the summer was over, for the sake of your child's health. I hope you will get out again this summer, during the hot months, for I begin to love the dear little creature from your description of her.

I was charmed with the account you gave me of your industry, the table-cloths of your own spinning, etc.; but the latter part of the paragraph, that you had sent for linen from France because weaving and flax were grown dear, alas! that dissolved the charm; and your sending for long black pins, and lace, and *feathers!* disgusted me as much as if you had put salt into my strawberries. The spinning, I see, is laid aside, and you are to be dressed for the ball! You seem not to know, my dear daughter, that, of all the dear things in this world, idleness is the dearest, except mischief.

The project you mention, of removing Temple

from me, was an unkind one. To deprive an old man, sent to serve his country in a foreign one, of the comfort of a child to attend him, to assist him in health, and take care of him in sickness, would be cruel if it was practicable. In this case it could not be done; for, as the pretended suspicions of him are groundless, and his behavior in every respect unexceptionable, I should not part with the child, but with the employment. But I am confident that, whatever may be proposed by weak or malicious people, the Congress is too wise and too good to think of treating me in that manner.

Ben, if I should live long enough to want it, is like to be another comfort to me. As I intend him for a Presbyterian, as well as a republican, I have sent him to finish his education at Geneva. He is much grown, in very good health, draws a little, as you will see by the enclosed, learns Latin, writing, arithmetic, and dancing, and speaks French better than English. He made a translation of your last letter to him, so that some of your works may now appear in a foreign language. He has not been long from me. I send the accounts I have of him, and I shall put him in mind of writing to you. I cannot propose to you to part with your own dear Will. I must one of these days go back to see him; happy to be once more all together! but futurities are uncertain. Teach him, however, in the meantime, to direct his worship more properly, for the deity of Hercules is now quite out of fashion.

The present you mention as sent by me was rather that of a merchant at Bordeaux; for he would never

give me any account of it, and neither Temple nor I know any thing of the particulars.

When I began to read your account of the high prices of goods, "a pair of gloves seven dollars, a yard of common gauze twenty-four dollars, and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way," I expected you would conclude with telling me that everybody, as well as yourself, was grown frugal and industrious; and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward, that "there never was so much pleasure and dressing going on," and that you yourself wanted black pins and feathers from France, to appear, I suppose, in the mode! This leads me to imagine that perhaps it is not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money is grown cheap, as every thing else will do when excessively plenty, and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances as when a pair of gloves might be had for half-a-crown. The war, indeed, may in some degree raise the prices of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary; and as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary by my example in furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest; for, as you say you should "have great pride in wearing any thing I send, and showing it as your father's taste," I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take

care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace; and the feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail.

If you happen again to see General Washington, assure him of my very great and sincere respect, and tell him that all the old generals here amuse themselves in studying the accounts of his operations, and approve highly of his conduct.

Present my affectionate regards to all friends that inquire after me, particularly Mr. Duffield and family and write oftener, my dear child, to your loving father, B. Franklin.

DCCCVI

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON

Passy, 4 June, 1779.

Dear Friend:—I received your kind letter of the 22d October last, which gave me great pleasure, as it informed me of your welfare, and of your appointment to the honorable office of Treasurer of Loans. I think the Congress judged rightly in their choice; and exactness in accounts and scrupulous fidelity in matters of trust are qualities for which your father was eminent, and which I was persuaded were inherited by his son when I took the liberty of naming him one of the executors of my will, a liberty which I hope you will excuse.

I am sorry for the losses you have suffered by the Goths and Vandals, but hope it will be made up to you by the good providence of God and the good-

will of your country, to whom your pen has occasionally been of service.

I am glad the enemy have left something of my gimcrackery that is capable of affording you pleasure. You are therefore very welcome to the use of my electrical and pneumatic machines as long as you think proper.

I enclose you a little piece or two of Oxford wit, which I have lately received, hoping they may afford you a few minutes' amusement. Present my respects to your good mother and sisters, and believe me ever, my dear friend, your most affectionate,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—Permit me to recommend the new Minister, the Chevalier de Luzerne, to your civilities, as a gentleman of most amiable character here, and a hearty friend of the American cause. If you can in any respect be serviceable to him, you will much oblige me.

DCCCVII

TO WILLIAM GREENE, GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND

Passy, June, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of December 10th, with the bills of exchange for two hundred and sixteen dollars, and with the list of goods you would have in return. As I live far from any seaport, and am unacquainted with merchandise, I sent the bills with your order directly to my nephew at Nantes, who will, I doubt not, accomplish it to your

satisfaction. I shall be glad of any opportunity of being serviceable to your son-in-law, both for your sake and his father's.

Your letter, with the first set of the bills, did not come to hand, which I regret the more, as by that means I have lost Mrs. Greene's letter, which you tell me was enclosed. Present my affectionate respects to her, and my love, with that of my grandson, to honest Ray, of whose welfare I am very glad to hear, and of his progress in his learning.

If my sister continues under your hospitable roof, let her know that I hope to receive hers of the 7th that you mention. Tell her I have not time now to write to her, but will by the next opportunity, and that I am well, and love her as well as ever. With great esteem and respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—If the Chevalier de la Luzerne should pass through your government, I recommend him warmly to your civilities. He goes over to supply the place of M. Gérard as his Most Christian Majesty's minister to the Congress. He is a gentleman of a most amiable character here, has great connections, and is a hearty friend to America.

DCCCVIII

TO HONORABLE THE COUNCIL OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY

Passy, 4 June, 1779.

Honorable Gentlemen:—The Commissioners at this court received the letter you did them the honor

of writing to them recommending the Marquis de Lafayette. I immediately sent it to be perused by the minister, who desires to have a copy of it. He was very favorably received by his Majesty, and has had given him a regiment of dragoons. He retains the warmest zeal for the American cause and affection for the people, and has been continually moving something or other with the ministry for the advantage of America ever since his arrival. The Chevalier De Ramondis, too, retains the most grateful sense of the attention paid him by your government during his illness under the loss of his arm. Several other officers speak highly in favor of our country on account of the civilities they received there, which has a very good effect here, and evinces the wisdom of the conduct you are accustomed to pursue with regard to strangers of merit. I thought it right to acquaint you with these circumstances, and I do it with more pleasure, as it gives me an opportunity of assuring you of the great respect with which I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—If the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who is going to America to succeed M. Gérard as minister from this court, should happen to put into Boston you will find him every way deserving the civilities he may receive independent of his public character. He is much esteemed and respected here, has great connections, and is a hearty friend to the cause of liberty and America.

DCCCIX

TO JOHN JAY

PASSY, 9 June, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I received a few days since, by way of St. Eustatia, the duplicate of a letter you did me the honor to write me of 3d January. But the act of Congress of December 23d which you mention, is not come to hand.

Col. S. Duicks, whom the secretary names to you, called here in his way to Holland, and brought me a recommendatory letter from Governor Trumbull, but neither himself nor that letter mentioned any thing of his business in Holland, except to see his friends; so that I yet know of nothing to the purport of that act. The other, of January 1st, is come to hand. Besides the reason given in it for deferring the expedition to Canada, there is one that would weigh much with me, and that is our want of sufficient quantity of hard money. The Canadians are afraid of paper, and would never take the Congress money. To enter a country which you mean to make a friend of, with an army that must have occasion every day for fresh provision, horses, carriage labor of every kind, having no acceptable money to pay to those that serve you, and to be obliged, therefore, from the necessity of the case, to take that service by force, is the sure way to disgust, offend, and by degrees make enemies of the whole people, after which all your operations will be more difficult, all your motions discovered, and every endeavor used to have you driven back out of their country.

I need not recommend the Chevalier de la Luzerne to the President of Congress. His public character will recommend him sufficiently to all the respect and consideration due to the minister of so great and good a prince as the king of France, our ally. I shall only mention that his private character here is an excellent one, and that he is connected by relation to some of the greatest and best people of this country. I hope that his residence with us will be made agreeable to him. I have written largely to the Committee. By our last advices from Holland the English interest diminishes there, and from England they write that the daily apprehensions of a war with Spain begin to have a serious effect in disposing people generally to wish for peace. Great preparations are making here in all the seaports, and this summer will probably produce some important action. With great respect and esteem, etc., etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCX

TO MR. BACHE (HIS SON-IN-LAW)

Passy, 9 June, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I have received yours of June [January?] 16th. You observe that you seldom hear from me. I have the same reason to complain, but I do not complain of you. It is the loss of ships, and the sinking of despatches when chased that cuts our correspondence to pieces.

Yours of October 22d gave me a good deal of

satisfaction in informing me of the adventures of your family, your return to Philadelphia, welfare, etc.

You desire me to set the price of the printing-house sold to Virginia; but I have received no account of the particulars whereof it consisted. Did they take the cases as well as the types? What were the number? There was a large mahogany press that cost me twenty-five guineas, and a small one that cost me twelve guineas; did they take those? And did they take all the letters, flowers, etc., etc., except the five cases of money types which you say the Congress have taken? . . . I hope, indeed, they did not take the presses; for I should be unwilling to part with them, as they were made under my own inspection, with improvements; and also a stone belonging to the press, and a number of iron chases, or frames, for fixing the pages, and many other things which I know not whether they have taken or not, which may be valued by any printer.

The script letters which the Congress have taken, cost me double the price of common letters of the same sizes; the long pica and long primer bill I remember amounted to forty pounds sterling. What I gave for the larger sort I have forgotten, but suppose about ten pounds. You may therefore settle that in the same manner as to the advance, etc. And when you are paid you may send [*End of record.*]

DCCCXI

TO MESSRS. J. ROCQUETTE, I. ELSVIER, AND BROTHERS ROCQUETTE

PASSY, 13 June, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:—I received your favor of the 7th inst., enclosing two notes of the United States for one thousand dollars each, for my inspection, which I return enclosed. I have not yet seen the resolution mentioned therein, but, by what I can recollect from the face of the notes themselves, I judge that the dollars for which the notes are given were of paper-money borrowed, and that the interest will be paid and the principal repaid in the same paper, which is now in state of great depreciation. If before the time of payment it should fall still lower, the possessor of the notes will be so much the loser. If, on the contrary, they should rise in value, of which, from the measures taken for that purpose there is great appearance, the possessor will be in proportion a gainer. The interest will be paid every year, but is payable only at the loan office in America from whence the bills issued, and to that end they must be produced there, that the payment may be endorsed. These bills have therefore been improperly brought to Europe, being of less value here, as they must return to have their effect, and, being *sola* bills, payable to the bearer, they have not the same security from the dangers of the sea that bills of exchange usually have; for they may not only be lost or destroyed by accidents, but, if taken, the enemy will reap the benefit of them. The insurance of

them back is therefore a proportionate diminution of their value. At what value they are at present current in America I cannot inform you, that depending on the fluctuating state of the paper there; nor do I know where they can be so well negotiated as the place where they are payable.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXII

TO MR. AR. GILLON, COMME.

Passy, 5 July, 1779.

Sir:—I received the honor of yours dated the 29th past. The zeal you show for the relief of Carolina is very laudable; and I wish it was in my power to second it by complying with your proposition. But the little squadron which you suppose to be in my disposition, is not, as you seem to imagine, fitted out at the expense of the United States; nor have I any authority to direct its operations. It was from the beginning destined by the concerned for a particular purpose. I have only, upon a request that I could not refuse, lent the *Alliance* to it, hoping the enterprise may prove more advantageous to the common cause than her cruise could be alone. I suppose, too, that they have sailed before this time. Your other scheme for raising a sum of 1,800,000 livres by subscription throughout France, to be advanced to the State of South Carolina on an interest of seven per cent., etc., being mixed with a commercial plan, is so

far out of my way, and what I cannot well judge of, but in the present circumstances I should think it not likely to succeed. However, as I am charged to procure a loan for the United States at a lower interest, I can have no hand in encouraging this particular loan, as it interferes with the other. And I cannot but observe that the agents from our different States running all over Europe begging to borrow money at high interest, has given such an idea of our poverty and distress as has exceedingly hurt the general credit, and made the loan for the United States almost impracticable. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXIII

TO MR. WILLIAMS

Passy, 8 July, 1779.

Dear Jonathan:—I received yours of the 1st and 2d inst. Enclosed I send as you desire Mr. Lee's original letter declining any further concern with the accounts. As it contains some malevolent insinuations relating to them that are groundless, I think it right you should at the same time see my observations on them, in the drafts of a letter I intended to send him in answer, but which on second thoughts I did not send, merely to avoid a continued altercation, for which I had neither time nor inclination, and he abundance of both.

I am much obliged to the gentlemen who have undertaken the trouble of examining your accounts,

and if they think fit to join Commodore Gillon to their number, and he will be so good as to accept, it will be very agreeable to me. I am sorry that M. Schweighauser declines it, as he was put into our business by Messrs. Lee, and it was therefore I named him in the request, though not an American.

I request you will make inquiry concerning the complaints contained in two papers I enclose, which were handed to me from the Spanish ambassador.

I suspect that some of the English cruisers do sometimes personate Americans to create mischief. Let me know if such vessels really went from Nantes.

I am, your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXIV

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, 8 July, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received your favors of the 2d and 4th instant. I am sorry for the accidents that have obliged your little squadron to return and refit; but I hope all may be for the best. Some days since, M. de Chaumont handed to me the substance of a letter in French, which contained heads of the instructions that M. de Sartine wished me to give you. I had them translated and put into the form of a letter to you, which I signed and gave back to M. de Chaumont, who, I suppose, has sent it to you. I have no other orders to give; for, as the court is at the chief expense, I think they have the best right to direct.

I observe what you write about a change of the destination; but when a thing has been once considered and determined on in council, they do not care to resume the consideration of it, having much business on hand, and there is not now time to obtain a reconsideration. It has been hinted to me that the intention of ordering your cruise to finish at the Texel is with a view of getting out that ship; but this should be kept a secret.

I can say nothing about Captain Landais' prize. I suppose the minister has an account of it, but I have heard nothing from him about it. If he reclaims it on account of his passport, we must then consider what is to be done. I approve of the careenage proposed for the *Alliance* as a thing necessary. As she is said to be a remarkably swift sailer, I should hope you might by her means take some privateers, and a number of prisoners, so as to continue the cartel, and redeem all our poor countrymen. My best wishes ever attend you. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXV

TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Dear Cousin:—The bearer M. Genet, Jr., a young gentleman of excellent character, goes to Nantes with an intention of spending a little time there in improving himself in the English language by conversing among our countrymen. I desire you would introduce him to their acquaintance, and I

recommend him warmly to all your civilities, which I shall esteem as done to myself.

I am ever,

Your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXVI

TO MR. DUBOURG

Passy, 13 August, 1779.

Dear Sir:—Having begun the affair of our loan by the means of our friend, M. Ferdinand Grand, banker, Rue Montmartre, he is in possession of all the particulars relating to it, and can fully satisfy the curiosity of the person who inquires through you. I need only mention, in answer to your eighth query, that the money borrowed being to be laid out in France for arms, ammunition, soldiers' clothing, etc., it will not answer our purpose to take any money but such as is current in France, and the American paper has no business here. Those who have brought any of it into France—except bills of exchange—have committed a folly in exposing their property to two risks for nothing, as it must go back again to find its value.

With regard to your proposition concerning your property in America, I should be glad to assist you in it, but I do not conceive it practicable. First, because the Congress has no lands in its disposition; the vacant lands are all in some or other of the particular States; they dispose of them by general

rules, and an application to them for a deviation from these general rules in favor of a particular person will hardly be attended to, for they will apprehend that having done it in favor of one they will be urged to do it for many, which would be attended with many great public inconveniences.

I am ever, my dear friend, etc., etc.

DCCCXVII

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

PASSY, 19 August, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I have just now received your favor of the 17th. I wrote to you a day or two ago, and have little to add. You ask my opinion what conduct the English will probably hold on this occasion,[1] and whether they will not rather propose a negotiation for a peace. I have but one rule to go by in judging of those people, which is, that whatever is prudent for them to do they will omit, and what is most imprudent to be done they will do it. This, like other general rules, may sometimes have its exceptions; but I think it will hold good for the most part, at least while the present ministry continues, or, rather, while the present madman has the choice of ministers.

You desire to know whether I am satisfied with the ministers here? It is impossible for anybody to

[1] Proposed descent of a French army on the coast of England, for which the French government were now preparing; but the plan was ultimately laid aside.

be more so. I see they exert themselves greatly in the common cause, and do every thing for us they can. We can wish for nothing more, unless our great want of money should make us wish for a subsidy, to enable us to act more vigorously in expelling the enemy from their remaining post and reducing Canada. But their own expenses are so great that I cannot press such an addition to it. I hope, however, that we shall get some supplies of arms and ammunition, and perhaps, when they can be spared, some ships to aid in reducing New York and Rhode Island.

At present I know of no good opportunity of writing to America. There are merchant-ships continually going, but they are very uncertain conveyances. I long to hear of your safe arrival in England, but the winds are adverse, and we must have patience. With the sincerest esteem and respect, I am ever, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXVIII

TO MR. DIGGES

Passy, 20 August, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I hear Capt. Conyngham is confined in England a prisoner. I desire you would take care to supply him with necessaries, that a brave man may not suffer for want of assistance in his distress. I ordered payment of your bill, but it has not yet appeared. I am ever, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXIX

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

PASSY, 24 August, 1779.

SIR:—The Congress, sensible of your merit towards the United States, but unable adequately to reward it, determined to present you with a sword, as a small mark of their grateful acknowledgment. They directed it to be ornamented with suitable devices. Some of the principal actions of the war, in which you distinguished yourself by your bravery and conduct, are therefore represented upon it. These, with a few emblematic figures, all admirably well executed, make its principal value. By the help of the exquisite artists France affords, I find it easy to express every thing but the sense we have of your worth and our obligations to you. For this, figures and even words are found insufficient. I therefore only add that, with the most perfect esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—My grandson goes to Havre with the sword, and will have the honor of presenting it to you.

DCCCXX

TO MR. CHARLES EPP [1]

PASSY, 27 August, 1779.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor to write me, concerning your inclination to remove

[1] Procureur at Altorf, Switzerland.

to America. In so great a country as is at present possessed by the thirteen United States, extending through such different climates, and having such a variety of soils and situations, there is no doubt but you might, if you were there, find one to your mind. Lands in general are cheap there, compared with the prices in Europe. The air is good, there are good governments, good laws, and good people to live with. And as you would probably make a good citizen, there is no doubt of your meeting with a welcome among them. But since you are in easy circumstances where you are, and there is no immediate necessity for your removing, I cannot advise your taking such a voyage with a family at this time, when, if taken by the enemy, you might be subject to many inconveniences. I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXI

FROM THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Havre, 29 August, 1779.

Sir:—Whatever expectations might have been raised from the sense of past favors, the goodness of the United States for me has ever been such that on every occasion it far surpasses any idea I could have conceived. A new proof of that flattering truth I find in the noble present which Congress have been pleased to honor me with, and which is offered in such a manner by your Excellency as will exceed any thing but the feelings of my unbounded gratitude.

In some of the devices I cannot help finding too honorable a reward for those slight services which, in concert with my fellow-soldiers, and under the godlike American hero's orders, I had the good-luck to render. The sight of these actions, where I was a witness of American bravery and patriotic spirit, I shall ever enjoy with that pleasure which becomes a heart glowing with love for the nation and the most ardent zeal for their glory and happiness. Assurances of gratitude, which I beg leave to present to your Excellency, are much too inadequate to my feelings, and nothing but those sentiments may properly acknowledge your kindness towards me.

The polite manner in which Mr. Temple Franklin was pleased to deliver that inestimable sword lays me under great obligations to him, and demands my particular thanks. With the most perfect respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

LAFAYETTE.

DCCCXXII

TO MR. SCHWEIGHAUSER

PASSY, 17 September, 1779.

SIR:—I have now before me your favors of July 31st and August 19th.

Your testimony with regard to Mr. Wm. Lee is fully sufficient to remove the suspicion of his sharing in your commission. I mentioned it, not as a charge against him, but as an excuse for you; five per cent. being, as I understood, more than double of what is

usual. I could wish I had nothing to do with mercantile business, as I am not versed in it. I perceive that you have abated the commission on the delivery of the tobacco to one per cent., but then that is one per cent. paid to your correspondent, and another one per cent. for yourself. To me it seems that your commission should be not on the whole sum, but only on what you paid your correspondent for doing the business; otherwise we pay twice for the same service. I must submit, however, to the custom of merchants. It may be against me, and if it is I suppose it is founded in some reason that at present I am unacquainted with. But if these two commissions are right, the article for travelling charges, 1,024 livres, wants explanation.

Notwithstanding what I said relating to such of your drafts as are founded on the part of your account I have refused none, but honored them all.

I am satisfied with your reason about the date of your bills. If I should be any time so straightened for money when in your debt, as that a sudden demand from you would be inconvenient to me, I will mention it to ——, and request that your bills may be drawn at one or two usances.

The Swedish ambassador has presented a memorial to M. De Vergennes relating to the prize and the demanded damages. He mentioned that the Swedish people were beaten and cruelly treated by ours. This is so contrary to our custom that I can hardly believe it. I must answer his memorial, and therefore wish to see again the papers that I may examine them. I think I sent them down to you, when

I desired you to get some of the letters translated. Please to return them to me, and you shall have them again when wanted for the trial. If you have received the opinion of the advocate of the Bureau of Prizes, which you expected, please to send me a copy of it.

The two sick persons who came over among the prisoners from England should undoubtedly be taken care of till they are able to go home. I wish to know their names, and the parts of America they come from. I have no objection to continuing the allowance to Captain Harris, supposing that he intends going by the first opportunity. Please to present my compliments to him, and request him to inform me about a trunk belonging to M. Louis Dupré, which was intrusted to his care, and which is inquired after.

I thought to have had the despatches ready to send by Captain Samson this day, but there are some points on which I must wait an answer from the court, in order to send that answer in my letters; this may yet require some days, but I think it will not exceed another week.

I approve of your assisting the American prisoners that are arriving from Lisbon, in the manner that Mr. Adams ordered for those come from England. They were, I believe, generally pretty well clothed by charities collected there. If any of these should be apparently in want of great clothing, it will be well to assist them with what may be absolutely necessary in that article.

I should think it would be right to discharge Mr.

Hill, the surgeon. I am sorry he has been kept so long. In my opinion surgeons should never be detained as prisoners, as it is their duty and their practice to help the sick and wounded of either side when they happen to have an opportunity. They should therefore be considered not as parties in any war, but as friends to humanity.

I request you to make inquiry by your correspondents in the different ports of Spain, what English prisoners brought in by the Americans were confined there. When you receive answers, please to communicate them to me.

I enclose you a copy of what I write to Mr. Williams relating to my orders about the prisoners. We must not regard reports.

I have the honor to be, with great esteem, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

I will transmit to Congress the memoire relating to the Baron d'Autroche.

DCCCXXIII

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 26 September, 1779.

Sir:—I received yesterday evening the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, together with the packet for M. de la Luzerne, which I shall take care to forward with my despatches. I could have wished it had been possible to write something positive to the Congress by this opportunity, on

the subject of the supplies they have asked, because I apprehend great inconveniences may arise from their being left in a state of uncertainty on that account, not only as the hope or expectation of obtaining those supplies may prevent their taking other measures, if possible, to obtain them, but as the disappointment will give great advantage to their enemies, external and internal. Your Excellency will be so good as to excuse my making this observation, which is forced from me by my great anxiety on the occasion. With the greatest respect, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXIV

TO MR. NESBIT

Passy, 29 September, 1779.

Sir:—Captain Conyngham has not been neglected. As soon as I heard of his arrival in England, I wrote to a friend to furnish him with what money he might want, and to assure him that he had never acted without a commission. I have been made to understand in answer that there is no intention to prosecute him, and that he was accordingly removed from Pendennis Castle and put among the common prisoners at Plymouth, to take his turn for exchange. The Congress, hearing of the threats to sacrifice him, put three officers in close confinement to abide his fate, and acquainted Sir George Collier with their determination, who probably wrote to the British ministers. I thank you for informing me what became of

his first commission. I suppose I can now easily recover it to produce on occasion. Probably the date of that taken with him being posterior to his capture of the packet, made the enemy think they had an advantage against him. But when the English government have encouraged our sailors intrusted with our vessels to betray that trust, run away with the vessels, and bring them into English ports, giving such traitors the value, as if good and lawful prizes, it was foolish imprudence in the English commodore to talk of hanging one of our captains for taking a prize without commission.

I have the honor to be with great esteem, sir,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXV

TO JAMES LOVELL

Passy, 30 September, 1779.

Sir:—I have within these few days received a number of despatches from you, which have arrived by the *Mercury* and other vessels. Hearing this instant of an opportunity from Bordeaux, and that the courier sets out from Versailles at five this evening, I embrace it just to let you know that I have delivered the letters from Congress to the king, and have laid the invoices of supplies desired (with a translation) before the ministers; and, though I have not yet received a positive answer, I have good reason to believe I shall obtain most of them, if not all. But, as this demand will cost the court a vast sum, and

their expenses in the war are prodigious, I beg I may not be put under the necessity, by occasional drafts on me, of asking for more money than is required to pay our bills for interest. I must protest those I have advice of from Martinique and New Orleans (even if they were drawn by permission of Congress), for want of money, and I wish the Committee of Commerce would caution their correspondents not to embarrass me with their bills.

I put into my pocket nothing of the allowance Congress has been pleased to make me. I shall pay it all in honoring their drafts and supporting their credit; but do not let me be burdened with supporting the credit of every one who has claims on the board of commerce or the navy. I shall write fully by the *Mercury*. I send you some of the latest newspapers, and have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXVI

TO ARTHUR LEE, ESQ.

Passy, 30 September, 1779.

Sir:—I received but yesterday morning, just as I was going out of town, the letter you did me the honor of writing me, dated the 26th inst., respecting my supplying you with money for your support in Spain. As I cannot furnish the expense, and there is not, in my opinion, any likelihood at present of your being received at that court, I think your reso-

lution of returning forthwith to America is both wise and honest.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXVII

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Passy, 1 October, 1779.

Dear Sir:—It is a long time since I did myself the honor of writing to you, but I have frequently had the pleasure of hearing of your welfare.

Your kindness to my grandson in offering to take him under your wing in the expedition is exceedingly obliging to me. Had the expedition gone on, it would have been an infinite advantage to him to have been present with you so early in life at transactions of such vast importance to great nations. I flatter myself, too, that he might possibly catch from you some tincture of those engaging manners that make you so much the delight of all that know you. Accept, however, my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments.

I send you enclosed a newspaper containing the particulars of Wayne's gallant attack on Stony Point. This is good news. But it is followed by some bad: the loss of our little squadron from Boston at Penobscot, which it is said our people were obliged to blow up. I hope Count d'Estaing's arrival in America will give us our revenge. Six thou-

sand troops are ordered to the West Indies to secure your conquests, and, I hope, make more. But I do not hear of any intention to send any to our country. I have no orders to request troops, but large ones for supplies, and I dare not take any further steps than I have done in such a proposition without orders. Accept in behalf of the Congress my thankful acknowledgments for your zeal to serve America. Occasions may offer which at present do not appear, wherein your bravery and conduct may be highly useful to her.

May every felicity attend you, is the wish of, dear sir, your affectionate and most obedient servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXVIII

TO EDWARD BRIDGEN

Passy, 2 October, 1779.

Dear Sir:—I received your favor of the 17th past, and the two samples of copper are since come to hand. The metal seems to be very good, and the price reasonable, but I have not yet received the orders necessary to justify my making the purchase proposed. There has indeed been an intention to strike copper coin, that may not only be useful as small change, but serve other purposes.

Instead of repeating continually upon every halfpenny the dull story that everybody knows (and what it would have been no loss to mankind if nobody had ever known), that George the Third is King

of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, etc., etc., to put on one side, some important proverb of Solomon, some pious moral, prudential or economical precept, the frequent inculcation of which, by seeing it every time one receives a piece of money, might make an impression upon the mind, especially of young persons, and tend to regulate the conduct: such as, on some, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;* on others, *Honesty is the best policy;* on others, *He that by the plough would thrive, himself must either hold or drive;* on others, *Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee;* on others, *A penny saved is a penny got;* on others, *He that buys what he has no need of, will soon be forced to sell his necessaries;* on others, *Early to bed and early to rise, will make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise;* and so on, to a great variety.

The other side it was proposed to fill with good designs, drawn and engraved by the best artists in France, of all the different species of barbarity with which the English have carried on the war in America, expressing every abominable circumstance of their cruelty and inhumanity that figures can express, to make an impression upon the minds of posterity as strong and durable as that on the copper. This resolution has been a long time forborne; but the late burning of defenceless towns in Connecticut, on the flimsy pretence that the people fired from behind their houses, when it is known to have been premeditated and ordered from England, will probably give the finishing provocation, and may occasion a vast demand for your metal.

I thank you for your kind wishes respecting my

health. I return them most cordially fourfold unto your own bosom. Adieu,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXIX

TO JOHN JAY, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 4 October, 1779.

Sir:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor to write to me of the —— of June last, inclosing acts of Congress respecting bills of exchange for two millions four hundred thousand livres tournois, drawn on me in favor of M. de Beaumarchais. The bills have not yet appeared, but I shall accept them when they do, relying on the care of Congress to enable me to pay them. As to the accounts of that gentleman, neither the Commissioners, when we were all together, nor myself since, have ever been able to obtain a sight of them, though repeatedly promised; and I begin to give over all expectation of them. Indeed, if I had them I should not be able to do much with them, or to controvert any thing I might doubt in them, being unacquainted with the transactions and agreements on which they must be founded, and having small skill in accounts. Mr. Ross and Mr. Williams, pressing me to examine and settle theirs, I have been obliged to request indifferent persons, expert in such business, to do it for me, subject to the revision of Congress; and I could wish that my time and attention were not taken up by any concerns in mercantile affairs, and thereby diverted from others more important.

The letters of Congress to the king were very graciously received. I have earnestly pressed the supplies desired, and the ministers (who are extremely well disposed towards us) are now actually studying the means of furnishing them. The assistance of Spain is hoped for. We expect to hear from thence in a few days. The quantity is great, and will cost a vast sum. I have this day accepted three of your drafts, part of the three hundred and sixty thousand livres, drawn for on the 9th of June; but when I ask for money to pay them, I must mention that, as they were drawn to purchase military stores, an abatement equal to the value may be made of the quantity demanded from hence; for I am really ashamed to be always worrying the ministers for more money. And as to the private loans expected, I wrote in a former letter that our public credit was not yet sufficiently established, and that the loan in Holland had not exceeded eighty thousand florins, to which there has since been no addition.

A M. Neufville came from thence to me last spring, proposing to procure great sums, if he might be employed for that purpose, and the business taken away from the house that had commenced it. His terms at first were very extravagant, such as that all the estates real and personal in the thirteen provinces should be mortgaged to him; that a fifth part of the capital sum borrowed should every year, for five years, be laid out in commodities and sent to Holland, consigned to him, to remain in his hands till the term (ten years) stipulated for final payment

was completed, as a security for the punctuality of it, when he was to draw the usual commissions; that all vessels or merchandise coming from America to Europe should be consigned to him or his correspondents, etc., etc. As I rejected these with some indignation, he came down to the more reasonable one of doing the business as it was done by the other house, who, he said, could do no more, being destitute of the interest which he possessed.

I did not care abruptly to change a house that had in other respects been very friendly and serviceable to us, and thereby throw a slur upon their credit, without a certainty of mending our affairs by it, and therefore told M. Neufville that if he could procure and show me a list of subscribers amounting to the sum he mentioned, or near it, I would comply with his proposition. This he readily and confidently undertook to do. But, after three months, during which he acquainted me from time to time that the favorable moment had not yet come, I received, instead of the subscription, a new set of propositions, among the terms of which were an additional *one per cent.*, and a patent from Congress, appointing him and his sons "*Commissioners for Trade and Navigation, and Treasurers of the General Congress and of every private State of the Thirteen United States of North America, through the Seven United Provinces*," with other extravagancies; which I mention, that it may be understood why I have dropped a correspondence on this subject with a man who seemed to me a vain promiser, extremely self-interested, and aiming chiefly to make an appearance without solidity,

and who, I understand, intends applying directly to Congress, some of his friends censuring me as neglecting the public interest in not coming into his measures.

The truth is I have no expectations from Holland while interest received there from other nations is so high and our credit there so low; while particular American States offer higher interest than the Congress, and even our offering to raise our interest tends to sink our credit. My sole dependence now is upon this court. I think reasonable assistance may be obtained here, but I wish I may not be obliged to fatigue it too much with my applications, lest it should grow tired of the connection.

Mr. Ross has lately demanded of me near twenty thousand pounds sterling, due to him from the Committee of Commerce, but I have been obliged to refuse him, as well as an application made last week by Mr. Izard for more money, though he has already had two thousand five hundred guineas, and another from Mr. Arthur Lee, though he has had five hundred guineas since the news of his being out of this commission.[1] He writes me that he will return to America forthwith if I do not undertake to supply his expenses. As I see no likelihood of his being received at Madrid, I could not but approve his resolution.

We had reason to expect some great events from the action of the fleets this summer in the Channel; but they are all now in port, without having effected any thing. The junction was late; and the length

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. II., pp. 262, 268, 272, 446.

of time the Brest fleet was at sea, equal to an East India voyage, partly on the hot Spanish coast, occasioned a sickness among the people that made their return necessary; they had chased the English fleet, which refused combat. The sick men are recovering fast since they were landed; and the proposed descent on England does not yet seem to be quite given up, as the troops are not withdrawn from the ports.

Holland has not yet granted the succors required by the English, not even given an answer to the requisition presented by Sir Joseph Yorke. The aids will be refused; and, as the refusal must be disagreeable, it will be postponed from time to time. The expectations of assistance from Russia and Prussia seem also to have failed the English; and they are as much at a loss to find effective friends in Europe as they have been in America.

Portugal seems to have a better disposition towards us than heretofore. About thirty of our people, taken and set ashore on one of her islands by the English, were maintained comfortably by the governor during their stay there, furnished with every necessary, and sent to Lisbon, where, on inquiry to whom payment was to be made for the expense they had occasioned, they were told that no reimbursement was expected, that it was the queen's bounty, who had a pleasure in showing hospitality to strangers in distress. I have presented thanks, by the Portuguese ambassador here in behalf of Congress; and I am given to understand that probably in a little time the ports of that nation will be open

to us as well as those of Spain. What relates to Spain I suppose Mr. Lee informs you of.

The sword ordered by Congress for the Marquis de Lafayette being at length finished, I sent it down to him at Havre, where he was with the troops intended for the invasion. I wrote a letter with it, and received an answer, copies of which I enclose, together with a description of the sword, and drawings of the work upon it, which was executed by the best artists in Paris, and cost altogether two hundred guineas. The present has given him great pleasure, and some of the circumstances have been agreeable to the nation.

Our cartel goes on, a second cargo of American prisoners, one hundred and nineteen in number, being arrived and exchanged. Our privateers have dismissed a great number at sea, taking their written paroles to be given up in exchange for so many of our people in their gaols. This is not yet quite agreed to on the other side, but some expectations are given me that it may take place. Certainly humanity would find its account in the practice of exchanging on parole, as all the horrors of imprisonment, with the loss of time and health, might be prevented by it.

We continue to insult the coasts of these *lords of the ocean* with our little cruisers. A small cutter, which was fitted out as a privateer at Dunkirk, called the *Black Prince*, has taken, ransomed, burnt, and destroyed about thirty sail of their vessels within these three months. The owners are about to give her a consort, called the *Black Princess*, for which

they ask a commission. The prisoners brought in serve to exchange our countrymen, which makes me more willing to encourage such armaments, though they occasion a great deal of trouble. Captain, now Commodore, Jones put to sea this summer with a little squadron consisting of a ship of forty guns, the *Alliance*, another frigate of twenty, with some armed cutters, all under American colors, with Congress commissions. He has sent in several prizes, has greatly alarmed the coast of Ireland and Scotland, and we just now hear that, going north about, he fell in with a number of ships from the Baltic, convoyed by a fifty-gun ship and a twenty-four-gun frigate, both of which he took, after an obstinate engagement, and forced several of the others ashore. This news is believed, but we wait the confirmation and the particulars.

The blank commissions remaining, of those sent to us here, are all signed by Mr. Hancock, which occasions some difficulty. If Congress approve of my continuing to issue commissions, I wish to have a fresh supply with the other necessary instructions, rules, bonds, etc., of which none are now left.

M. le Comte de Mallebois, esteemed one of the best generals in this country, and who loves our cause, has given me a memorial, containing a project for a corps here for your service, which I promised to lay before Congress, and accordingly enclose a copy. I know nothing of the sentiments of Congress on the subject of introducing foreign troops among us, and therefore could give no expectation that the plan

would be adopted. It will, however, be a pleasure to him to know that his good-will to serve them has been acceptable to the Congress.

A Major Deborre, who has been in America, and some other officers who have quitted our service in disgust, endeavor to give an idea that our nation does not love the French. I take all occasions to place in view the regard shown by Congress to good French officers, as a proof that the slight these gentlemen complain of is particular to themselves, and probably the effect of their own misbehavior. I wish for the future, when any of this sort of people leave our armies to come home, some little sketch of their conduct or character may be sent me, with the real causes of their resignation or departure, that I may be the more able to justify our country.

Here are returned in the last cartel a number of French sailors, who had engaged with Captain Conyngham, were taken in coming home in one of his prizes, and have been near two years in English prisons. They demand their wages and share of prize money. I send their claim, as taken before the officers of the classes at Dunkirk. I know nothing of the agreement, which they allege was made with them. Mr. Hodge perhaps can settle the affair, so that they may have justice done them. These sort of things gives me a great deal of trouble. Several of those men have made personal applications to me, and I must hear all their stories, though I cannot redress them. I enclose also the claim of two gunners upon a prize made by the *Boston*, Captain Tucker. I am persuaded that Congress wish to see justice

done to the meanest stranger that has served them. It is justice that establishes a nation.

The Spanish ambassador here delivered me several complaints against our cruisers. I imagine that all the injuries complained of are not justly chargeable to us, some of the smaller English cruisers having pillaged Spanish vessels under American colors, of which we have proof upon oath; and also that no such American privateers, as are said to have committed these robberies after coming out of Nantes, have ever been known there, or in any other part of France, or even have existed. But, if any of the complaints are well founded, I have assured the ambassador that the guilty will be punished and reparation made.

The Swedish ambassador also complains of the taking of a ship of his nation by Captain Landais, the master of which lays his damages at sixty thousand livres. I understand it was his own fault that he was stopped, as he did not show his papers. Perhaps this, if proved, may enable us to avoid the damages.

Since writing the above, I have received the following further particulars of the action between Commodore Jones and the English men-of-war. The forty-four-gun ship is new, having been but six months off the stocks; she is called the *Serapis;* the other of twenty guns is the *Countess of Scarborough.* He had before taken a number of valuable prizes, particularly a rich ship bound to Quebec, which we suppose he may have sent to America. The English, from mistaken intelligence, imagining he had a body

of troops with him to make descents, have had all their northern coasts alarmed, and have been put to very expensive movements of troops, etc.

The extravagant luxury of our country, in the midst of all its distresses, is to me amazing. When the difficulties are so great to find remittances to pay for the arms and ammunition necessary for our defence, I am astonished and vexed to find upon inquiry that much the greatest part of the Congress interest bills come to pay for tea, and a great part of the remainder is ordered to be laid out in gewgaws and superfluities. It makes me grudge the trouble of examining and entering and accepting them, which indeed takes a great deal of time.

I yesterday learned from M. de Monthieu that every thing necessary for equipping two frigates, of thirty-six guns each, such as sailcloth, cordage, anchors, etc., etc., which he sent to the Congress from hence two years since, remains stored in the warehouses of his correspondent, M. Carrabas, at Cape François, having never been called for. Probably by the miscarriage of letters the Navy Board never heard of those goods being there. I shall, nevertheless, leave the application I have lately made for materials for a frigate of thirty-six guns to take its course. But I send you herewith copies of two invoices of the cargo of the *Thérèse*, one of which was sent by us, the other by M. de Beaumarchais, to the end that inquiry may be made after the whole.

On this occasion give me leave to remark that, of all the vast quantities of goods we have sent you by many different vessels since my being in France, we

never were happy enough to receive the least scrip of acknowledgment that they had ever come to hand, except from Mr. Langdon, of a cargo arrived at Portsmouth, and I think of one more. This is doubtless owing to the interruption our correspondence has met with, and not altogether to neglect. But as such advices of receipt may be made in short letters, it would be well to send more copies. The following is a matter of less importance. It is two years, I believe, since I sent the monument of General Montgomery. I have heard that the vessel arrived in North Carolina, but nothing more. I should be glad to know of its coming to hand, and whether it is approved. Here it was admired for the goodness and beauty of the marble and the elegant simplicity of the design. The sculptor has had an engraving made of it, of which I enclose a copy. It was contrived to be affixed to the wall within some church, or in the great room where the Congress met. Directions for putting it up went with it. All the parts were well packed in strong cases.[1] With the greatest respect, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—*October 28th.* I kept the packet in hopes of sending a more explicit account of what might be expected in regard to the supplies. The express, which was daily expected from Spain when I began this letter, arrived but a few days since. I am now informed that court is understood to be in treaty with the Congress in America to furnish a sum of

[1] This monument is erected in the back of St. Paul's Church, in New York.

hard money there, and on that account excuses itself from sharing in the expense of furnishing these supplies. This has a little deranged the measures intended to be taken here, and I am now told that the whole quantity of goods demanded can hardly be furnished, but that as soon as the court returns from Marly the ministers will consult, and do the best they can for us. The arms, I hear, are in hand at Charleville. I am unwilling to keep the packet any longer, lest she should arrive on our coasts too far in the winter and be blown off. I therefore send away the despatches; but if I have the result of the council in time to reach her by post, I will send it in a separate letter. The hearty good-will of the ministry may be depended on, but it must be remembered that their present expenses are enormous.

DCCCXXX

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

PASSY, 15 October, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I received the account of your cruise and engagement with the *Serapis*, which you did me the honor to send me from the Texel. I have since received your favor of the 8th, from Amsterdam. For some days after the arrival of your express, scarce any thing was talked of at Paris and Versailles but your cool conduct and persevering bravery during that terrible conflict. You may believe that the impression on my mind was not less strong than

on that of others; but I do not choose to say in a letter to yourself all I think on such an occasion.

The ministry are much dissatisfied with Captain Landais, and M. de Sartine has signified to me in writing that it is expected that I should send for him to Paris, and call him to account for his conduct, particularly for deferring so long his coming to your assistance, by which means, it is supposed, the States lost some of their valuable citizens, and the king lost many of his subjects, volunteers in your ship, together with the ship itself.

I have, accordingly, written to him this day, acquainting him that he is charged with disobedience of orders in the cruise, and neglect of his duty in the engagement; that a court-martial being at this time inconvenient, if not impracticable, I would give him an earlier opportunity of offering what he has to say in his justification, and for that purpose direct him to render himself immediately here, bringing with him such papers or testimonies as he may think useful in his defence. I know not whether he will obey my orders, nor what the ministry would do with him if he comes; but I suspect that they may, by some of their concise operations, save the trouble of a court-martial. It will, however, be well for you to furnish me with what you may judge proper to support the charges against him, that I may be able to give a just and clear account to Congress. In the meantime it will be necessary, if he should refuse to come, that you should put him under an arrest, and in that case, as well as if he comes, that you should either appoint some person to the command, or take

it upon yourself; for I know of no person to recommend to you as fit for that station.

I am uneasy about your prisoners; I wish they were safe in France.[1] You will then have completed the glorious work of giving liberty to all the Americans that have so long languished for it in the British prisons; for there are not so many there as you have now taken.

I have the pleasure to inform you that the two prizes sent to Norway are safely arrived at Bergen. With the highest esteem, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—I am sorry for your misunderstanding with M. de Chaumont, who has a great regard for you.

DCCCXXXI

TO HONORABLE CAPTAIN LANDAIS

Passy, 15 October, 1779.

Sir:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing me, the 4th instant, with an abstract of your journal. I thank you for your care in sending it so early, and I congratulate you on the success of your cruise.

But I am sorry to find there are charges against you for disobedience of orders, and also that the ministry here think the great loss among the king's subjects, viz., the French volunteers on board the

[1] The number of prisoners was five hundred and four.

Bon Homme Richard, was owing to your not coming up sooner to her assistance, as it is supposed you might have done. M. de Sartine has in consequence written to me that it is expected I should cause an immediate inquiry to be made into your conduct. A court-martial is the regular way, if you choose it; but as that may occasion a long discussion, and be in many respects at this time inconvenient to the service, I have (with the advice, too, of your friend M. de Chaumont) thought it better to give you an opportunity of justifying yourself, both to the ministry and to me, coming directly to Paris, which I do hereby accordingly desire (or, to use a stronger expression, as you may think such necessary to justify your leaving your ship, I do require) that you render yourself here as soon as possible. I need not advise you to bring with you such papers and testimonials as you may think proper for your justification, and will only add that you may be sure of finding in me every disposition to do that justice to your character which it shall appear to merit.

I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXXII

TO HONORABLE THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY FOR THE EASTERN DEPARTMENT, BOSTON

Passy, 17 October, 1779.

Gentlemen:—I received the letters you did me the honor of writing to me the 30th of July and 18th

of August last, by the *Mercury* packet-boat and by a French cutter; the other despatches Capt. Samson was entrusted with, came all safe to hand, and I should have despatched him sooner if I had not found it necessary to detain him in order to send by him to Congress some advices of importance which could not be sooner obtained.

The cruise of our little American squadron, under command of Commodore Jones, intended partly to intercept the Baltic trade, has had some success, though not all that was hoped for. The coasts of Britain and Ireland have been greatly alarmed, apprehending descents, it being supposed that he had land forces with him. This has put the enemy to much expense in marching troops from place to place. Several valuable prizes have been made of merchant-ships, particularly two: one from London, three hundred tons and eighty-four men, with twenty-two guns, laden with naval stores for Quebec; the other from Liverpool bound to New York and Jamaica, of twenty-two guns and eighty-seven men, laden with provisions and bale goods. These two are safely arrived at Bergen, in Norway; two smaller prizes are arrived in France, and a number of colliers have been burnt or ransomed. The Baltic fleet was met with, and the two men-of-war who convoyed them, viz., the *Serapis*, a new ship of forty-four guns, and the *Countess of Scarborough*, of twenty guns, are taken, after a long and bloody engagement, and are brought into the Texel. But the merchant-ships escaped during the conflict, for which the *Alliance* and one of the other ships are

blamed, whether justly or not may be inquired into. Our Commodore's ship was so shattered that she could not be kept afloat, and the people being all taken out of her, she sank the second day after the engagement. The rest of the squadron are refitting in the Texel, from which neutral place they will be obliged soon to depart with their prizes and prisoners, near four hundred. I wish they may arrive safe in France, for I suppose the English will endeavor to intercept them. Jones' bravery and conduct in the action has gained him great honor.

I condole with you the loss of your armament against Penobscot, but I suppose the sugar ships since taken and brought into your port have more than compensated the expense,[1] though not the disappointment of the well intended expedition. The Congress write for naval stores. I have acquainted them that I have lately been informed that stores for fitting out two 36-gun frigates, which we bought here and sent out two years ago, are still lying in the warehouses of M. Carrabas, at Cape François, having been forgotten there or never sent for. Perhaps you may obtain them. The Quebec ship, if we can get her safe home, will afford large supply.

I am much obliged to you for the newspapers. I shall direct M. Schweighauser to send you an account of the advances made to the officers of the *Alliance*, if he has not already done it.

With great respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

[1] Hutchinson, in his diary, says they did.

DCCCXXXIII

TO JAMES LOVELL

PASSY, 17 October, 1779.

SIR:—The foregoing is a copy of my last. I have now before me your several favors therein mentioned, viz., of June 13th, July 9th and 16th, and August 6th. I received the journals of Congress from January 1st to June 12th, which you took care to send me; but the first and second volumes, which you mention, are not yet come to hand. I hear they are at Madrid. I know not how they came there, nor well how to get them from thence. Perhaps you can easier send me another set.

As I hear of the arrival of the Chevalier de la Luzerne, by whom I wrote a long letter to your committee, I presume you have received it, and that it is not necessary to send more copies. By this opportunity I write largely to the President. You ask: "Will no one, under a commission from the United States," etc.? Enclosed I send you a copy of the instructions I gave to Commodore Jones, when it was intended to send with him some transports and troops to make descents in England. Had not the scheme been altered by a general one of a grand invasion, I know he would have endeavored to put some considerable towns to a high ransom, or have burnt them. He sailed without the troops, but he nevertheless would have attempted Leith, and went into the Firth of Edinburgh with that intention, but a sudden hard gale of wind forced him out again. The late provocations by the burning of Fairfield

and other towns, added to the preceding, have at length demolished all my moderation; and were such another expedition to be concerted, I think so much of that disposition would not appear in the instructions. But I see so many inconveniences in mixing the two nations together, that I cannot encourage any further proposal of the kind. This has ended better than I expected; and yet a mortal difference has arisen between Captains Jones and Landais, that makes me very uneasy about the consequences. I send you the journal of the cruise.

I am glad to understand that Congress will appoint some person here to audit our accounts. Mine will give but little trouble, and I wish much to have them settled. And for the future I hope I shall have none to settle but what relate to my expenses.

The quarrel you mention between Mr. Deane and Mr. Lee I have never meddled with, and have no intention to take any part in it whatever. I had and have still a very good opinion of Mr. Deane, for his zeal and activity in the service of his country; I also thought him a man of integrity. But if he has embezzled public money, or traded with it on his private account, or employed it in stockjobbing, all which I understand he is charged with, I give him up. As yet, I think him innocent. But he and his accusers are able to plead their own causes, and time will show what we ought to think of them.

I send you with this a piece written by a learned friend of mine on the taxation of free States. which I imagine may give you some pleasure. Also, a late royal edict, for abolishing the remains of slavery in

this kingdom. Who would have thought, a few years since, that we should live to see a king of France giving freedom to slaves, while a king of England is endeavoring to make slaves of freemen.

There is much talk all over Europe of an approaching peace by the mediation of Russia and Holland. I have no information of it to be depended on, and believe we ought to lay our account on another campaign, for which I hope you will receive in time the supplies demanded. Nothing is wanting on my part to forward them; and I have the satisfaction to assure you that I do not find the regard of this court for the Congress and its servants in any respect diminished. We have just heard from Norway, that two of the most valuable prizes taken by the *Alliance*, Captain Landais, in the squadron of Commodore Jones, are safe arrived at Bergen, viz., the ship from London to Quebec, laden with naval store, and that from Liverpool to New York and Jamaica. They were letters of marque, of twenty-two guns and eighty-four men each; I wish we may get them safe to America. The squadron itself is got into Holland, with the two prize men-of-war, where they are all refitting. Great damage has been done to the English coal trade, and four hundred prisoners have been taken, which will more than redeem the rest of our people from their captivity in England, if we can get them safe from Holland to France; but I suppose the English will endeavor to intercept us, and recover their ships if possible. With great esteem for yourself and the Committee, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXXXIV

TO —— AUSTIN

Passy, 20 October, 1779.

Sir:—I received your several favors of June 10th, July 12th and 27th. It gave me pleasure to hear of your safe arrival in your native country, and I am obliged to you for the intelligence your letters contain, which I hope you will continue, and for the newspapers. This campaign in Europe has not been so active as was expected, owing to contrary winds and other accidents, which a long time prevented the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, and afterward the meeting with that of the English. But something may yet be done before winter. The American flag has, however, disturbed the British coasts, interrupted their home trade a good deal, and alarmed them with apprehensions of descents in different places. Our little squadron, under Commodore Jones, has also lately taken two of their men-of-war and brought them into Holland with near four hundred prisoners, which will be a means, I hope, of delivering the rest of our countrymen who are confined in English prisons. Here is nothing worth your acceptance that can be proposed to you. I wish you success in any business you may undertake, being with much regard, sir, etc.

B. Franklin.

My grandson presents his respects.

DCCCXXXV

TO MR. STADEL

PASSY, 20 October, 1779.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me, inclosing a project for raising a regiment for the service of the United States, of which you desire my sentiment. The Congress, I believe, have never had any intention of raising troops in Europe and transporting them to America; the expense would be too great for them, and the difficulty extreme, as the English command the seas, and would often intercept their transports. And having myself no orders relative to such a project, I cannot give the least assurance that it would be accepted. We are, nevertheless, obliged to the officer for his friendship in making the proposition, and I request that my thanks, in behalf of my country, may be presented to him.

I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCXXXVI

TO THE COMMERCIAL COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS, PHILA.

PASSY, 21 October, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:—I received the honor of yours dated the 21st of July, containing an extract from Mr. Pollock's letter [1] to you, in which he mentions his drafts

[1] Oliver Pollock was the spirited American merchant in New Orleans who rendered material service, in the early days, to the new-born nation.

on Mr. Delap for 10,897 dollars, and his expectation that in case of any difficulty I will see those bills paid. I should certainly do every thing in my power to support the credit of the States, and every person acting under their authority; but I have been so exhausted by great and unexpected drafts and expenses that I am glad those bills have never been proposed to me, as I could not have taken upon myself to pay them. And I beg that you would not in future have any dependence of that kind upon me without knowing beforehand from me that I shall be able to pay what is desired. I hope you will excuse my giving this caution, which is forced from me by the distress and anxiety such occasional and unforeseen demands have occasioned me.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXXVII

TO A FRIEND IN AMERICA

Passy, 25 October, 1779.

—— I received your kind letter of February 14th, the contents of which gave me a kind of melancholy satisfaction. The greater ease you will now enjoy makes some compensation in my mind for the uncomfortable circumstance that brought it about. I hope you will have no more affliction of that kind, and that, after so long and stormy a day, your evening may be serene and pleasant.

The account you have had of the vogue I am in

here has some truth in it. Perhaps few strangers in France have had the good fortune to be so universally popular; but the story you allude to, mentioning "mechanic rust," is totally without foundation. But one is not to expect being always in fashion. I hope, however, to preserve, while I stay, the regard you mention of the French ladies; for their society and conversation, when I have time to enjoy them, are extremely agreeable.

The enemy have been very near you indeed. When only at a distance of a mile, you must have been much alarmed. We have given them a little taste of this disturbance upon their own coasts this summer; and, though we have burnt none of their towns, we have occasioned a good deal of terror and bustle in many of them, as they imagined our Commodore Jones had four thousand troops with him for descents.

I am glad to learn that my dear sister continued in good health and good spirits, and that she had learnt not to be afraid of her friend, fresh air. With the tenderest affection, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXXXVIII

TO SAMUEL COOPER

Passy, 27 October, 1779.

Dear Sir:—It is a long time since I have had the pleasure of hearing from you. The intelligence you were used to favor me with was often useful to our

affairs. I hope I have not lost your friendship, together with your correspondence. Our excellent Mr. Winthrop, I see, is gone. He was one of those old friends, for the sake of whose society I wished to return and spend the small remnant of my days in New England. A few more such deaths will make me a stranger in my own country. The loss of friends is the tax a man pays for living long himself. I find it a heavy one.

You will see by the newspapers that we have given some disturbance to the British coasts this year. One little privateer out of Dunkirk, the *Black Prince*, with a Congress commission, and a few Americans mixed with the Irish and English smugglers, went round their islands and took thirty-seven prizes in less than three months. The little squadron of Commodore Jones, under the same commission and colors, has alarmed those coasts exceedingly, occasioned a good deal of internal expense, done great damage to their trade, and taken two frigates, with four hundred prisoners. He is now with his principal prizes in Holland, where he is pretty well received, but must quit that neutral country as soon as his damages are repaired. The English watch with a superior force his coming out, but we hope he will manage so as to escape their vigilance. Few actions at sea have demonstrated such steady, cool, determined bravery as that of Jones in taking the *Serapis*.

There has been much rumor this summer throughout Europe of an approaching peace, through the mediation of Russia and Holland; but it is understood to arise from the invention of stockjobbers

and others interested in propogating such opinions. England seems not to be yet sufficiently humbled to acknowledge the independence of the American States, or to treat with them on that footing, and our friends will not make a peace on any other. So we shall probably see another campaign.

By the invoices I have seen and heard of, sent hither with Congress interest bills of exchange to purchase the goods, it should seem that there is not so great a want of necessaries as of superfluities among our people. It is difficult to conceive that your distresses can be great when one sees that much the greatest part of that money is lavished in modes, and gewgaws, and tea! Is it impossible for us to become wiser, when by simple economy, and avoiding unnecessary expenses, we might more than defray the charge of war? We export solid provision of all kinds, which is necessary for the sustenance of man, and we import fashions, luxuries, and trifles. Such trade may enrich the traders, but never the country.

The good-will of all Europe to our cause as being the cause of liberty, which is the cause of mankind, still continues, as does the universal wish to see the English pride humiliated and their power curtailed. Those circumstances are encouraging, and give hopes of a happy issue. Which may God grant, and that you, my friend, may live long a blessing to your country. I am, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXXXIX

TO MR. HOLKER

PASSY, 28 October, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—Inclosed I send you a packet I have just received from Morlaix, containing some of the papers you requested me to recover, and a receipt for the rest. You will see what M. Diot says about the trunks of clothes. It will be best, I imagine, for the person who desires to have them, if he knows which they are, to describe them to M. Diot or some other person, and order them to be bid for at the sale. I received a quantity of apple jelly, but no letter. If it was for me, one thousand thanks to good Madame Holker. I am ever, my dear friend, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCXL

TO MESSRS. FIZEAUX AND GRAND

PASSY, 29 October, 1779.

GENTLEMEN:—I have advice from England that eight boxes of printing characters are sent from London to your care for me. If they are arrived, I request you would ship them to Rouen, addressed to M. Holker there. I suppose you have Dutch vessels frequently going there. Their value is about £100 sterling, which I desire you to get insured. Whatever charges you are at I shall repay, with thanks.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCXLI

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN

PASSY, 9 November, 1779.

DEAR SIR:—I have received several kind letters from you, which I have not regularly answered. They gave me, however, great pleasure, as they acquainted me with your welfare, and that of your family and other friends; and I hope you will continue writing to me as often as you can do it conveniently.

I thank you much for the great care and pains you have taken in regulating and correcting the edition of those papers. Your friendship for me appears in almost every page, and if the preservation of any of them should prove of use to the public, it is to you that the public will owe the obligation. In looking them over, I have noted some faults of impression that hurt the sense, and some other little matters, which you will find all in a sheet under the title of "Errata." You can best judge whether it may be worth while to add any of them to the errata already printed, or whether it may not be as well to reserve the whole for correction in another edition, if such should ever be. Inclosed I send a more perfect copy of the "Chapter." [1]

If I should ever recover the pieces that were in the hands of my son, and those I left among my papers in America, I think there may be enough to make

[1] Alluding to the celebrated "Parable against Persecution." Mr. Vaughan had reprinted it from the copy first published by Lord Kames, which was imperfect.

three more such volumes, of which a great part would be more interesting.

As to the *time* of publishing, of which you ask my opinion, I am not furnished with any reasons, or ideas of reasons, on which to form any opinion. Naturally I should suppose the bookseller to be from experience the best judge, and I should be for leaving it to him.

I did not write the pamphlet you mention. I know nothing of it. I suppose it is the same, concerning which Dr. Priestley formerly asked me the same question. That for which he took it was entitled, "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," with these lines in the title-page:

> " Whatever is, is right. But purblind man
> Sees but a part o' the chain, the nearest links;
> His eyes not carrying to that equal beam,
> That poises all above." DRYDEN.
>
> *London. Printed MDCCXXV.*

I return the manuscripts you were so obliging as to send me; I am concerned at your having no other copies; I hope these will get safe to your hands. I do not remember the Duke de Chaulnes showing me the letter you mention. I have received Dr. Crawford's book, but not your abstract, which I wait for as you desire.

I send you also M. Dupont's *Table Économique*, which I think an excellent thing, as it contains in a clear method all the principles of that new sect, called here *les Économistes*.

Poor Henly's dying in that manner is inconceivable to me. Is any reason given to account for it, besides insanity?

Remember me affectionately to all your good family, and believe me, with great esteem, my dear friend, yours, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXLII

TO JOHN BAPTIST BECCARIA

Passy, 19 November, 1779.

Dear Sir:—Having some time since heard of your illness with great concern, it gave me infinite pleasure to learn this day from M. Chantel, who did me the honor of a visit, that you were so far recovered as to be able to make little excursions on horseback. I pray God that your convalescence may be quick and perfect, and your health be again firmly established. Science would lose too much in losing one so zealous and active in its cause, and so capable of accelerating its progress and augmenting its dominions.

I find myself here immersed in affairs which absorb my attention, and prevent my pursuing those studies in which I always found the highest satisfaction; and I am now grown so old as hardly to hope for a return of that leisure and tranquillity so necessary for philosophical disquisitions. I have, however, not long since thrown a few thoughts on paper relative to the Aurora Borealis, which I would send

you, but that I suppose you may have seen them in the *Journal* of the Abbé Rozier. If not, I will make out a copy, and send it to you, perhaps with some corrections.

Every thing of your writing is always very welcome to me. If, therefore, you have lately published any new experiments or observations in physics, I shall be happy to see them, when you have an opportunity of sending them to me. With the highest esteem, respect, and affection, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXLIII

TO CAPTAIN CONYNGHAM

Passy, 22 November, 1779.

Sir:—It gave me great pleasure to hear of your escape out of prison, which I first learnt from six of the men who broke out with you and came to France in a boat. I was then anxious lest you should be retaken, and I am very glad indeed to hear of your safe arrival at Amsterdam. I think it will be best for you to stay awhile at Dunkirk, till we see what becomes of the little squadron from Holland, for which it is said the English are lying in wait with a superior force. The Congress resented exceedingly the inhuman treatment you met with, and it ordered three English officers to be confined in the same manner, to abide your fate.

There are some Frenchmen returned to Dunkirk who were put by you into one of your first prizes,

which was afterwards carried into England. I wish you would adjust their claims of wages, prize-money, etc., and put them in a way of getting what may be due to them.

I write to M. Coffyn by this post to supply you with necessaries. You will be as frugal as possible, money being scarce with me and the calls upon me abundant.

With great esteem, I have, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXLIV

TO R. BERNSTORFF, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN DENMARK

Passy, 22 December, 1779.

Sir:—I have received a letter from M. de Chezaulx, consul of France at Bergen in Norway, acquainting me that two ships, viz., the *Betsey* and the *Union*, prizes taken from the English on their coasts by Captain Landais, commander of the *Alliance* frigate, appertaining to the United States of North America, which prizes having met with bad weather at sea, that had damaged their rigging and had occasioned leaks, and being weakly manned had taken shelter in the supposed neutral port of Bergen, in order to repair their damages, procure an additional number of sailors and the necessary refreshments; that they were in the said port enjoying, as they conceived, the common rights of hospitality, established and practised by civilized nations, under the care of the above said consul, when, on the 28th of October

last, the said ships, with their cargoes and papers, were suddenly seized by officers of his Majesty, the King of Denmark, to whom the said port belongs; the American officers and seamen turned out of their possession, and the whole delivered to the English consul.

M. de Chezaulx has also sent me the following as a translation of his Majesty's order, by which the above proceedings are said to be authorized, viz.: "The English minister having insisted on the restitution of two vessels which had been taken by the American privateer called the *Alliance*, commanded by Captain Landais, and which were brought into Bergen, viz., the *Betsey* of Liverpool, and the *Union* of London, his Majesty has granted this demand on this account, because he has not as yet acknowledged the independence of the colonies associated against England, and because that these vessels for this reason cannot be considered as good and lawful prizes. Therefore, the said two ships shall be immediately liberated, and allowed to depart with their cargoes." By a subsequent letter from the same consul, I am informed that a third prize belonging to the United States, viz., the *Charming Polly*, which arrived at Bergen after the others, has also been seized and delivered up in the same manner, and that all the people of the three vessels, after being thus stripped of their property (for every one had an interest in the prizes), were turned on shore to shift for themselves, without money, in a strange place, no provision being made for their subsistence, or for sending them back to their country.

Permit me, sir, to observe on this occasion that the United States of America have no war but with the English; they have never done any injury to other nations, particularly none to the Danish nation; on the contrary, they are in some degree its benefactors, as they have opened a trade of which the English made a monopoly, and of which the Danes may now have their share, and, by dividing the British empire, have made it less dangerous to its neighbors. They conceived that every nation whom they had not offended was by the rights of humanity their friend; they confided in the hospitality of Denmark, and thought themselves and their property safe when under the roof of his Danish Majesty. But they find themselves stripped of that property, and the same given up to their enemies, on this principle only, that no acknowledgment had yet been formally made by Denmark of the independence of the United States; which is to say, that there is no obligation of justice towards any nation with whom a treaty promising the same has not been previously made. This was indeed the doctrine of ancient barbarians, a doctrine long since exploded, and which it would not be for the honor of the present age to revive, and it is hoped that Denmark will not, by supporting and persisting in this decision, obtained of his Majesty apparently by surprise, be the first modern nation that shall attempt to revive it.[1]

[1] "The ancients," says Vattel, "did not conceive themselves bound under any obligations towards a people with whom they were not connected by a treaty of friendship. At length the voice of nature was heard by civilized nations; they acknowledged all mankind as brothers." An injustice of the same kind, done a century or two

The United States, oppressed by and at war with one of the most powerful nations of Europe, may well be supposed incapable in their present infant state of exacting justice from other nations not disposed to grant it; but it is in human nature that injuries as well as benefits received in times of weakness and distress, national as well as personal, make deep and lasting impressions; and those ministers are wise, who look into futurity and quench the first sparks of misunderstanding between two nations, which, neglected, may in time grow into a flame, all the consequences whereof no human prudence can foresee, which may produce much mischief to both, and cannot possibly produce any good to either. I beg leave, through your Excellency, to submit these considerations to the wisdom and justice of his Danish Majesty, whom I infinitely respect, and who, I hope, will reconsider and repeal the orders above recited; and that, if the prizes, which I hereby reclaim in behalf of the United States of America, are not actually gone to England, they may be stopped and re-delivered to M. de Chezaulx, the consul of France at Bergen, in whose care they before were, with liberty to depart for America when the season shall permit. But, if they should be already gone to England, I must then claim from his Majesty's equity the value of the said prizes, which is esti-

since by some English in the East Indies, Grotius tells us, "was not without its partisans, who maintained that by the ancient laws of England no one was liable to punishment in that kingdom for outrages committed against foreigners, when no treaty of alliance had been contracted with them." But this principle he condemns in the strongest terms.—*History of the Troubles in the Netherlands*, Book xvi.

mated at fifty thousand pounds sterling, but which may be regulated by the best information that can by any means be obtained. With the greatest respect, I am, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXLV

FROM CAPTAIN CONYNGHAM

Texel Road, 22 December, 1779.

Honorable Sir:—I wrote you last from Amsterdam. At that time informed of my going to Dunkirk, but meeting with Commodore Jones prevented me, and supposing the *Alliance* will be ordered home as soon as she may get to France. The hurry I was obliged to leave England could not get my account with me. Mr. Digges was to send it to Dunkirk as soon as he could get it from Plymouth. I hope ere this you have a settlement from the *Geoine* of the prizes left in care of Mr. Lagoanese & Co. Should be glad to know the result in that quarter. The two West Indiamen that were given up by the court of France, they paying the captors. I must think we have an undoubted right to be paid for the packet and brig of —— The brig had a valuable cargo. In reality they should [pay] for the confinement we were under. I shall acquaint you with the many favors I received since I was a captive. First, in New York, that Sir George Collier, ordered irons on my legs, with a sentry on board the ship. Mr. Collier, going on an expedition, ordered me to jail, there

put me in the condemned room. The first night a cold plank my bed, a stone for a pillow. Second night allowed a something to lie on. In this horrid room was kept for eight days without the least morsel of bread, or any thing but water, from the keeper of the prison. After many notes, etc., sent to the jailer, at last he made his appearance. After expostulating on the impropriety of such treatment, he told me *he had such orders*, but would take it upon himself to release me on my giving him my strongest assurances I would not make my escape. I readily consented, it not being in the power of man to get out of the condemned room. By all accounts this [is] the first instance of this jailer's humanity. A creature after Clinton's own heart. In the prison of New York I continued till that tyrant Collier returned. A stranger to his mode of war would be certain he was from Gambia, or that quarter. Then I was told to get ready to go on board the prison-ship, was moved to a separate apartment in the prison, then a pair of criminal irons put on my legs—weight, fifty pounds; at the door put into the hangman's cart,—all in form as if bound to the gallows. I was then put into a boat and took alongside of the *Raisonable*, [and] then showed a paper, signed Commd. Jones, ordering me to be sent to England in the packet. In those irons I was brought to Pendennis Castle. Then, not content, they manacled my hands with a new-fashioned pair of ruffles, fitted very tight. In this condition I was kept there fifteen or sixteen days, then brought to Plymouth and lodged in the black-hole for eight days, before they

would do me the honor of committing me on suspicion of high treason on his Majesty's seas; then put into Mill prison, where we committed treason through his earth and made our escape. This, sir, is an account of their favors, insults excepted. I must acquaint your Excellency that the poor unfortunate prisoners in Plymouth are in a most distressed situation. The donation, when I left that, had been at 6*d.* per week. I am afraid, could they not be exchanged soon, will be obliged to enter in their service. They cannot live on the government allowance. I hope to have the favor of a letter from you. I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. Conyngham.

DCCCXLVI

TO JOSHUA JOHNSON [1]

Passy, 29 December, 1779.

Sir:—I am much obliged by your kind attention in sending me from time to time the American newspapers that have come to your hands. Please to accept my thankful acknowledgments.

I have the pleasure now to acquaint you that though my application, at your request, for arms or a loan of money for your province in particular was not attended with success, the opinion here being (as I think I formerly wrote you), that all such applications should regularly come to the Congress; yet,

[1] A merchant in Nantes. His daughter was afterwards Mrs. J. Q. Adams.

an aid being now lately granted to that body for the whole, there is no doubt but Maryland will obtain its share of what shall arrive in America.

If I have not corresponded with you so punctually as you might expect, and as I could have wished to do, I pray you to excuse me. I have had too much business, with too little help. The constant expectation of a secretary, who had long been voted, but did not arrive, prevented my engaging such assistance as I wanted; and I have not been able by increased application to supply the deficiency.

I do not understand that by the treaty of alliance between France and America, an American taking a house and settling in France to carry on business is exempted from the duties and services that would have been required of a native of France inhabiting the same house. The *droit d'aubaine* is indeed abolished in our favor, but in other respects I should suppose that Americans settled here, as well as Frenchmen settled in America, must, while they live as inhabitants, be subject to the laws of the respective countries of which they at the same time claim and enjoy the protection. I am sorry, however, that you find this so inconvenient as to induce you to quit the kingdom. Particular circumstances may have occasioned the quartering of soldiers on the inhabitants last year, which in time of peace, may rarely happen.

DCCCXLVII

TO W. STRAHAN, ESQ.

PASSY, 24 January, 1780.

SIR:—I received yours of Dec. 31st. By this time you are probably satisfied that the subject of it was a mistake, and therefore requires no answer. I congratulate you on the marriage of your daughter, which I lately heard of. My ancient regard for her is undiminished, and my best wishes attend her. Please to present to Mrs. Strahan the respects of

Your long affectionate, humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCXLVIII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

PASSY, 27 January, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received yours of the 10th instant. I shall be glad to learn how the taking of the Dutch ships has been accommodated. We have yet no news of the *Alliance*, but suppose she is cruising. We are more in pain for the *Confederacy*, which sailed the 28th of October from the Capes of Delaware. There is some hope that she went to Charleston to take in Mr. Laurens; for some passengers, arrived in France, who left Philadelphia several weeks after her sailing, say that it was a general opinion she would call there before she departed for Europe. If this was not the case, we fear she must be lost, and the loss will be a very severe one.

I send you enclosed a translation of a letter that I think I sent you the original of before. Perhaps it may serve our Leyden friend.

I am sorry you have any difference with the ambassador, and wish you to accommodate it as soon as possible. Depend upon it that no one ever knew from me that you had spoken or written against any person. There is one concerning whom I think you sometimes receive erroneous information. In one particular I know you were misinformed—that of his selling us arms at an enormous profit; the truth is we never bought any of him. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXLIX

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 2 February, 1780.

Dear Friend:—It is some time since I procured the discharge of your Captain Stephenson. He did not call here in his way home. I hope he arrived safely, and had a happy meeting with his friends and family.

I have long postponed answering your letter of the 29th of June. A principal point in it, on which you seemed to desire my opinion, was the conduct you thought America ought to hold in case her allies should, from motives of ambition or resentment of former injuries, desire her to continue the war beyond what should be reasonable and consistent with her particular interests. As often as I took up your

letter in order to answer it, this suggestion displeased me, and I laid it down again. I saw no occasion for discussing such a question at present, nor any good end it could serve to discuss before the case should happen; and I saw inconveniences in discussing it. I wish, therefore, you had not mentioned it. For the rest, I am as much for peace as ever I was, and as heartily desirous of seeing the war ended as I was to prevent its beginning, of which your ministers know I gave a strong proof before I left England, when, in order to an accommodation, I offered at my own risk, without orders for so doing, and without knowing whether I should be owned in doing it, to pay the whole damage of destroying the tea at Boston, provided the acts made against that province were repealed. This offer was refused. I still think it would have been wise to have accepted it. If the Congress have therefore entrusted to others rather than to me, the negotiations for peace, when such shall be set on foot, as has been reported, it is perhaps because they may have heard of a very singular opinion of mine, that there hardly ever existed such a thing as a bad peace or a good war, and that I might therefore easily be induced to make improper concessions. But at the same time they and you may be assured that I should think the destruction of our whole country, and the extirpation of our whole people, preferable to the infamy of abandoning our allies.

As neither you nor I are at present authorized to treat of peace, it seems to little purpose to make or consider propositions relating to it. I have had so

many such put into my hands, that I am tired of them. I will, however, give your proposal of a ten years' truce this answer, that, though I think a solid peace made at once a much better thing, yet, if the truce is practicable and the peace not, I should be for agreeing to it. At least I see at present no sufficient reasons for refusing it, provided our allies approve of it. But this is merely a private opinion of mine, which perhaps may be changed by reasons that at present do not offer themselves. This, however, I am clear in, that withdrawing your troops will be best for you, if you wish a cordial reconciliation, and that the truce should produce a peace. To show that it was not done by compulsion, being required as a condition of the truce, they might be withdrawn beforehand, for various good reasons. But all this is idle chat, as I am persuaded, that there is no disposition for peace on your side, and that this war will yet last many years. I know nothing, and believe nothing, of any terms offered to Sir Henry Clinton.

The prisoners taken in the *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough* being all treated for in Holland, and exchanged there, I hope Mr. Brown's son is now safe at home with his father. It grieved me, that the exchange there, which you may remember I immediately proposed, was so long delayed. Much human misery might have been prevented by a prompt compliance; and so might a great deal, by the execution of parole promises taken at sea; but, since I see no regard is paid to them in England, I must give orders to our armed ships that cruise in Europe to secure

their prisoners as well as they can, and lodge them in French or Spanish prisons. I have written something on this affair to Mr. Hodgson,[1] and sent to him the second passport for a cartel to Morlaix, supposing you to be out of town. The number of prisoners we now have in France is not easily ascertained. I suppose it exceeds one hundred; yet you may be assured, that the number which may be brought over by the two cartels shall be fully exchanged, by adding to those taken by us, as many as will make up the complement out of those taken by the French, with whom we have an account since the exchange in Holland of those we carried in there. I wish therefore you would, as was proposed, clear your prisons of the Americans, who have been so long confined there. The cartels, that may arrive at Morlaix, will not be detained.

You may have heard, that accounts upon oath have been taken in America, by order of Congress, of the British barbarities committed there. It is expected of me to make a school-book of them, and to have thirty-five prints designed here by good artists, and engraved, each expressing one or more of the different horrid facts, to be inserted in the book, in order to impress the minds of children and posterity with a deep sense of your bloody and insatiable malice and wickedness. Every kindness I hear of, done by an Englishman to an American prisoner, makes me resolve not to proceed in the work, hoping a reconciliation may yet take place. But

[1] William Hodgson was an agent in London appointed to look after American prisoners in England, and superintend their exchange.

every fresh instance of your devilism weakens that resolution, and makes me abominate the thought of a reunion with such a people. You, my friend, have often persuaded me, and I believe it, that the war was not theirs, nor approved by them. But their suffering it so long to continue, and the wretched rulers to remain who carry it on, makes me think you have too good an opinion of them. Adieu, my dear friend, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCL

TO RICHARD PRICE

Passy, 6 February, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received but very lately, your kind favor of October 14th, by Dr. Ingenhousz, who brought it, having stayed long in Holland. I sent that enclosed, directly to Mr. Lee. It gave me great pleasure to understand that you continue well. Take care of yourself; your life is a valuable one. Your writings, after all the abuse you and they have met with, begin to make serious impressions on those who at first rejected the counsels you gave; and they will acquire new weight every day, and be in high esteem when the cavils against them are dead and forgotten.

Please to present my affectionate respects to that honest, sensible, and intelligent society,[1] who did me so long the honor of admitting me to share in their instructive conversations. I never think of the hours I so happily spent in that company, without regretting

[1] Supposed to allude to a club at the London Coffee-house.

that they are never to be repeated; for I see no prospect of an end to this unhappy war in my time. Dr. Priestley, you tell me, continues his experiments with success. We make daily great improvements in *natural*—there is one I wish to see in *moral*—philosophy: the discovery of a plan that would induce and oblige nations to settle their disputes without first cutting one another's throats. When will human reason be sufficiently improved to see the advantage of this? When will men be convinced that even successful wars at length become misfortunes to those who unjustly commenced them, and who triumphed blindly in their success, not seeing all its consequences? Your great comfort and mine in this war is, that we honestly and faithfully did every thing in our power to prevent it. Adieu; and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLI

TO JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

Passy, 8 February, 1780.

Dear Sir:—Your kind letter of September 27th came to hand but very lately, the bearer having stayed long in Holland. I always rejoice to hear of your being still employed in experimental researches into nature, and of the success you meet with. The rapid progress *true* science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be

carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity, and give them absolute levity, for the sake of easy transport. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce; all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting even that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in as fair a way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!

I am glad my little paper on the *Aurora Borealis* pleased. If it should occasion further inquiry, and so produce a better hypothesis, it will not be wholly useless. I am ever, with the greatest and most sincere esteem, dear sir, etc., B. Franklin.

Enclosed in the foregoing Letter; being an Answer to a separate Paper received from Dr. Priestley

I have considered the situation of that person very attentively. I think that, with a little help from the *Moral Algebra*,[1] he might form a better judgment than any other person can form for him. But, since my opinion seems to be desired, I give it for continuing to the end of the term, under all the present disagreeable circumstances. The connection will then die a natural death. No reason will be expected to be given for the separation, and, of course,

[1] See letter to Dr. Priestley, dated September 19, 1772.

no offence taken at reasons given; the friendship may still subsist, and in some other way be useful. The time diminishes daily, and is usefully employed. All human situations have their inconveniences; we *feel* those that we find in the present, and we neither *feel* nor *see* those that exist in another. Hence we make frequent and troublesome changes without amendment, and often for the worse.

In my youth I was passenger in a little sloop descending the river Delaware. There being no wind, we were obliged, when the ebb was spent, to cast anchor and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive, the company strangers to me and not very agreeable. Near the river-side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where, it struck my fancy, I could sit and read (having a book in my pocket) and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned. I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh, in crossing which, to come to my tree, I was up to my knees in mire; and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes before the mosquitoes, in swarms, found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible, so that I returned to the beach and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the laugh of the company. Similar cases in the affairs of life have since frequently fallen under my observation.

I have had thoughts of a college for him in America. I know no one who might be more useful to the public in the instruction of youth. But there are possible unpleasantnesses in that situation; it cannot be obtained but by a too hazardous voyage at this time for a family; and the time for experiments would be all otherwise engaged.[1]

DCCCLII

TO M. DE SARTINE

PASSY, 13 February, 1780.

SIR:—Enclosed is the order your Excellency required of me in the letter you yesterday did me the honor of writing to me, relating to the English prisoners brought in to L'Orient by the *Black Prince* and other American privateers.

I beg leave to mention to your Excellency that there are still remaining in the English prisons 410 Americans, some of whom have languished there near three years. They had great hopes of obtaining their liberty in exchange for those taken by the squadron under Commodore Jones, a great part of which were taken by the *Alliance* and delivered to M. Le Duc de la Vauguyon under a kind of promise

[1] The advice contained in this paper related to Dr. Priestley himself, who had engaged to live with Lord Shelburne, as his librarian, at a salary of about three hundred pounds per annum, for a certain number of years; but, before the term had expired, he became dissatisfied with his situation and requested counsel from Dr. Franklin on the subject.—W. T. F.

made by him to M. Jones, that they should be exchanged for Americans. I have not heard that any thing has been done in that respect, and I fear they will be in despair if not speedily released. I therefore entreat your Excellency to take that matter into consideration, and favor me with as many English prisoners as may serve to exchange those poor people, when they shall be brought over in the cartels expected at Morlaix.

The *Black Prince*, the *Black Princess*, and the *Fearnot*, American privateers, are, I suppose, now on a new cruise, and will, I hope, bring in more English prisoners; I hope the same also from the *Alliance* now at Corunna. If we once had our prisoners from England, several other privateers would immediately be manned with them, and probably give as much trouble to the English as those above mentioned.

There were thirty-eight English and Irishmen said to be concerned in the conspiracy on board the *Alliance* when the Marquis de Lafayette came over. They were left in prison at Brest. I do not see any probability of these being ever brought to a trial, and perhaps the best thing that can be done with them is to exchange them for honester men. If your Excellency approves of it, I will give the same orders relating to them when you send any prisoners from that port.

With greatest respect, I am your Excellency's, etc.,

DCCCLIII

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, 19 February, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received yours from Carone of the 16th past, and from L'Orient of the 13th inst. I rejoice that you are so safely arrived in France, *malgré* all the pains to intercept you.

As to the refitting of your ship at the expense of this court, I must acquaint you that there is not the least probability of obtaining it, and therefore I cannot ask it. I hear too much already of the extraordinary expense you made in Holland, to think of proposing an addition to it, especially as you seem to impute the damage she has sustained more to Captain Landais' negligence than to accidents of the cruise. The whole expense will therefore fall upon me, and I am ill provided to bear it, having so many unexpected calls upon me from all quarters. I therefore beg you will have mercy on me, and put me to as little charge as possible, and take nothing that you can possibly do without.

As to sheathing with copper, it is totally out of the question. I am not authorized to do it, if I had money; and I have not money, if I had orders. The purchase of the *Serapis* is in the same predicament. I believe the sending of cordage and canvas from Amsterdam has already been forbidden; if not, I shall forbid it. I approve of your applying to Messrs. Gourdale & Moylan for what repairs you want, having an exceedingly good opinion of those gentlemen; but, let me repeat, for God's sake be

sparing, unless you mean to make me a bankrupt, or have your drafts dishonored for want of money in my hands to pay them.

We are likely to obtain fifteen thousand stands of good arms from the government. They are much wanted in America. M. de Lafayette has just now proposed that you should take them as ballast. You know best if this is practicable.

Mr. Ross requests to be permitted to take his passage with you. As he has been a servant of the States in making their purchases in Europe, it seems to me that it would be wrong to refuse him, if you can accommodate him. There is also a particular friend of mine, Mr. Samuel Wharton of Philadelphia, who desires to go with you. These gentlemen will doubtless lay in their own stores, and pay as customary for their accommodations, and I am persuaded you will find them agreeable company. Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard also propose to take their passages in your ship, whom I hope you can likewise accommodate. Pray write me immediately your sentiments on these particulars; and let me know, at the same time, when you think you can be ready, that I may forward my despatches.

I am glad to hear that your indisposition is wearing off. I hope your health will soon be reëstablished. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLIV

TO COL. FLEURY

PASSY, 26 February, 1780.

SIR:—I am sorry you were disappointed in meeting me at Versailles. In all your billets except that of yesterday you omitted mentioning where you lodged, otherwise I could have acquainted you that I should not be at court on the day you expected me.

I suppose you will acquaint the Congress or General Washington with your reasons for desiring a prolongation of your furlough. As you have not communicated them to me, I know not what to say in order to enforce them. I can therefore only forward your request and pray that it may be favorably considered, which I shall do. I imagine, however, that the Congress have so high an opinion of your merit as an officer, and the importance of having you in actual service, that the request will not be lightly granted.

With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCLV

FROM THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

PARIS, 29 February, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—In consequence of the assent that your Excellency was pleased to honor my request with, I shall beg your obliging help positively to fix my ideas on some affairs relating to our army, in

which I had the happiness of acting as one of your agents at the court of Versailles.

From the ministers of war and the minister of foreign affairs I get the most positive assurance that our fifteen thousand stands of arms, with the same number of accoutrements, will be soon delivered for the use of the American army, and safely conveyed. The other demands I have made in that department have not been as yet positively answered to, but I shall get a return of such articles as may be obtained from M. de Montbarrey; and that return I shall have the honor of sending to your Excellency as soon as it comes into my hands.

According to your request, I have made it a point to carry with me about four thousand complete suits, and have got from the minister of the navy such an order as will direct the captain of the frigate appointed for my passage, not only to take on board the clothing, that will be brought to Rochelle, but even, if necessary for making room, to disembark a part of his provisions.

In consequence of positive ministerial assurances, I make no doubt but that you will have the safest convoy for the remaining six thousand suits of clothes, that are making at Nantes. I have heard of a hundred and twenty bales of cloth for public service, that are sent by you on board of the *Alliance*, but do not know exactly how much clothing they will afford for the army. Notwithstanding your despatches to Congress, which I hope I shall be intrusted with, I confess it would be very agreeable for me to know exactly the quantity and the

kind of the several articles that you are preparing for us; so that I may give to General Washington a positive basis, which his Excellency can depend upon.

I had this morning the honor of imparting to you the ideas I proposed to Count de Vergennes, for providing new clothing for the army, that might arrive before the winter; and, as to the conversation on money affairs, in my private capacity I may be much less moderate than the ministers of the United States. I beg your pardon, my good friend, for the trouble I am giving you, but your friendship encourages me to do it; and I know such a note, as I beg leave to require, will be extremely agreeable when I arrive at headquarters.[1] With the most sincere attachment and perfect regard, I have the honor to be, etc., LAFAYETTE.

DCCCLVI

TO LOUIS XVI [2]

M. Franklin attendoit l'arrivée de la fregatte *La Confederation*, pour envoyer à Philadelphie des munitions de guerre, et l'habillement complet de quinze mille soldats, qui en sont absolument depourvus.

[1] For further details of the transactions referred to in this letter, see the history of these transactions in *Washington's Writings*, Vol. VII., pp. 477–506.

[2] This letter is found in the Stevens collection, neither addressed, dated, nor signed. It was probably put into French, to be handed to the King, who did not read English. Why the Count de Vergennes was passed over, in making such a communication, does not appear. It may have been done with his approval.

Cette fregatte etoit destinée à porter M. Gérard en France; elle a été dematée de tous mats sur le banc de Terre Neuve, et est en relache a la Martinique; ou elle sera employée a des correspondances entre la Martinique et l'Amerique Septentrionale ou à convoyer en France les navires marchands.

M. Franklin ne peut suplier au deffaut de cette fregatte, qu'en implorant au nom des Etats Unis de l'Amerique Septentrionale, les bontés de sa Majesté trés Chretienne, pour accorder incessament un vaisseau de guerre, dans lequel il puisse faire charger les munitions de guerre et les habillements dont les troupes americaines ont le plus pressant bezoing. Il est d'autant plus essentiel que ce vaisseau soit d'unne marche et d'unne force superieure que rien ne pouroit remplacer la perte des dits aprovisionements. Il est à desirer que ce vaisseau soit pris dans le port de Rochefort parceque les habillements se font à Nantes.

Le dit vaisseau peut se rendre a l'Amerique Septentrionale avec trois mois de vivres parcequ'il en trouvera abondament à Philadelphie ou, de memoire d'homme, on n'a jamais fait de si bonne recolte que la dernière, ainsy que dans tout le continent. Au deffaut d'equipages français on poura y suplier par des equipages Americains, qui attendent leur échange en Angleterre contre les prisonniers que L'Escadre Jones a fait sur les Anglais.

Le Vaisseau de guerre qui sera accordé sera a mesme s'il est destiné ensuitte pour les colonies françaises, de proteger les navires marchands qui sont en grand nombre et qui porteront des vivres de toutte espéce.

M. Franklin suplie sa Majesté trés Chretienne de luy accorder avec bonté unne prompte reponse sur la demande attendu qu'il ne peut retarder les avis a faire passer au Congrès sur les secours qu'il est chargé d'envoyer.

DCCCLVII

TO M. DE LAFAYETTE

PASSY, 2 March, 1780

DEAR SIR:—I received with pleasure the letter you honored me with of the 29th past, and am infinitely obliged by the zeal and assiduity with which you have forwarded our affairs at Versailles. The 15,000 arms and accoutrements are a great article.

I had written to Capt. Jones that, besides the 122 bales of cloth, we hoped for that quantity arms which it was supposed he might take as ballast. I think the clothing (4,000 suits) was also mentioned to him by M. de Chaumont. In his last letter to me he says he will take as much as possible, and hopes he may be able to cram in the whole, if not, your ship can take the rest. I wish much to know where the arms are and when they can be rendered at L'Orient.

Mr. Williams, I hear, is indefatigable in preparing the clothing, and hopes to have the whole 10,000 suits ready by the end of the month. I wish they could go with you, but that being impossible, I hope we shall get another ship of force to carry them.

They are made precisely according to the directions of the Committee.

If, on seeing the accounts, I find I can add a proportion of clothes for officers, which you urge so earnestly, I shall do it with pleasure. But from the large and unexpected drafts often made upon me by Congress, I am become timid. I must take care of their credit and my own, and cannot take hazardous steps, as protesting or not paying one of their bills would be attended with great mischief on both sides the water; and when I consider the vast expense occasioned to this nation by the war, I am ashamed to be repeatedly worrying the ministers by applications for more money.

I ought to let Capt. Jones know as soon as possible whether the arms are to go with him, as he would stow them low to serve partly for ballast. If a ship can be obtained for them and what shall remain of the clothing, perhaps it may be as well to excuse the *Alliance* from that article and let her take more of the clothing.

I am told the 122 bales of cloth to be shipped by Mr. Ross for the Congress will by computation make for 8,000 suits. These will be in addition to the 10,000 making by Mr. Williams. Those suits will be composed of coat, waistcoat, breeches, overalls, two pair of stockings, two pair of shoes, two shirts, two stocks, and a hat for each man. I think there will also be buckles. If there be any further information that you want, let me know and I will give what I can.

With the sincerest esteem and affection, I am, dear sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLVIII

TO SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

PASSY, 4 March, 1780.

SIR:—M. Gérard, under whose care I understand the despatches from Congress to me were forwarded, is not yet arrived here, and I have not received them. I cannot, therefore, at present answer any thing that may be contained in them. He is, however, expected next week, and I may afterwards have time to write further by the *Alliance*. Mr. Adams is come, but did not bring duplicates of those despatches. I have, in obedience to the order of Congress, which he produced to me, furnished him with one thousand louis-d'ors. I have also given a credit to Mr. Jay upon the correspondent of our banker at Madrid for an equal sum. I have not yet heard of his arrival there. His letter to me was from Cadiz, of the 28th of January.

In my last I gave some account of the success of our little squadron under Commodore Jones. Three of their prizes sent into Bergen in Norway were, at the instance of the British minister, seized by order of the court of Denmark, and delivered up to him. I have, with the approbation of the ministry here, drawn up and sent to that court a memorial reclaiming those prizes. It went through the hands of the French minister residing there, who has delivered it; but I have yet no answer. I understand from the French consul at Bergen, that the prizes remain still in that port, and it is said there is some hope that the order may be reversed; but this is doubtful,

and I suppose the Congress will immediately consider this important affair, and give me such instructions upon it as they may judge proper. With this, I send a copy of the memorial.

During the cruise a mortal quarrel took place between the Commodore and Captain Landais. On their arrival in Holland, M. de Sartine, Minister of the Marine, proposed to me the sending for Landais, in order to inquire into his conduct. I doubted the propriety of my meddling in the affair; but Captain Landais' friends conceiving it a measure that might be serviceable to him, and pressing it, I complied, and he came accordingly to Paris. I send the minutes of the inquiry for the consideration of Congress. I have not presumed to condemn or acquit him, doubting as well my own judgment as my authority. He proposes to demand a court-martial in America. In his absence from the ship, the Commodore took the command of her, and on quitting the Texel made a cruise through the channel to Spain, and has since returned to L'Orient, where the ship is now refitting in order to return to America. Captain Landais has not applied to me to be replaced in her, and I imagine has no thought of that kind, having before on several occasions expressed to me and others his dissatisfaction with his officers, and his inclination on that account to quit her. Captain Jones will therefore carry her home, unless he should be prevailed with to enter another service, which, however, I think is not likely, though he has gained immense reputation all over Europe for his bravery.

As vessels of war under my care create me a vast

deal of business, of a kind, too, that I am unexperienced in, and by my distance from the coast is very difficult to be well executed, I must repeat my earnest request that some person of skill in such affairs may be appointed in the character of consul to take charge of them. I imagine that much would by that means be saved in the expense of their various refittings and supplies, which to me appears enormous.

Agreeably to the order of Congress, I have employed one of the best artists here in cutting the dies for the medal intended for M. de Fleury. The price of such work is beyond my expectation, being a thousand livres for each die. I shall try if it is not possible to have the others done cheaper.

Our exchange of prisoners has been for some time past at a stand, the English Admiralty refusing, after long consideration, to give us any men in return for those who have been dismissed by our armed vessels on parole, and the actual prisoners we had, being all exchanged. When the squadron of Commodore Jones arrived at the Texel with five hundred English prisoners, I proposed exchanging there; but this was declined, in expectation, as I heard from England, of retaking them in their way to France. The stay of our ships in Holland, through the favor of the States, being prolonged, and the squadron stationed to intercept us being tired of cruising for us, the British ministry consented at length to a cartel with France, and brought Frenchmen to Holland to exchange for those prisoners instead of Americans. These proceedings have occasioned our poor people to be kept longer in confinement; but the Minister of the

Marine, having given orders that I should have as many English, another cartel charged with Americans is now daily expected, and I hope in a few months to see them all at liberty. This for their sakes, and also to save expense; for their long and hard imprisonment induces many to hazard attempts of escaping; and those who get away through London and Holland, and come to Paris in their way to some seaport in France, cost, one with another, I believe, near twenty pounds sterling a head.

The delays in the exchange have I think been lengthened by the Admiralty, partly with the view of breaking the patience of our people and inducing them to enter the English service. They have spared no pains for this purpose, and have prevailed with some. The number of these has not indeed been great, and several of them lost their lives in the blowing up of the *Quebec*. I am also lately informed from London, that the flags of truce with prisoners from Boston, one of which is seized as British property, will obtain no Americans in exchange; the returned English being told that they had no authority or right to make such agreements with rebels, etc. This is not the only instance in which it appears that a few late successes have given that nation another *hour of insolence*. And yet their affairs upon the whole wear a very unpromising aspect. They have not yet been able to find any allies in Europe. Holland grows daily less and less disposed to comply with their requisitions; Ireland is not satisfied, but is making new demands; Scotland and the Protestants in England are uneasy, and the associations

of counties in England, with committees of correspondence to make reforms in the government, all taken together, give a good deal of apprehension at present, even to their mad ministers; while their debt, on the point of amounting to the amazing sum of two hundred millions, hangs as a millstone upon the neck of their credit, and must erelong sink it beyond redemption.

The disposition of this court continues as favorable as ever, though it cannot comply with all our demands. The supplies required, in the invoice sent me by the Committee, appeared too great and numerous to be immediately furnished. Three millions of livres were, however, granted me, with which, after deducting what will be necessary to pay the interest bills, and other late drafts of Congress, I could not venture in ordering more than ten thousand suits of clothes. With these, we shall have fifteen thousand arms and accoutrements. A good deal of the cloth goes over in the *Alliance*, purchased by Mr. Ross, which, it is computed, may make seven or eight thousand suits more. But although we have not obtained the invoice of goods, this court being at immense expense in the preparations for the next campaign, I have reason to believe that a part of those preparations will be employed in essential assistance to the United States, and I hope effectual, though at present I cannot be more particular.

I have sent to Mr. Johnson the vote of Congress relative to the settlement of the accounts. He has expressed his readiness to enter on the service. Mr.

Deane is soon expected here, whose presence is very necessary, and I hope with his help they may be gone through without much difficulty. I could have wished it had suited Mr. Lee to have been here at the same time.

The Marquis de Lafayette, who, during his residence in France, has been extremely zealous in supporting our cause on all occasions, returns again to fight for it. He is infinitely esteemed and beloved here, and I am persuaded will do every thing in his power to merit a continuance of the same affection from America. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLIX

TO GENERAL GATES

Passy, 5 March, 1780.

I embrace this opportunity of the Marquis de Lafayette's return to the army to salute you, my dear old friend, and to present you with my best wishes for your health and prosperity.

He will deliver you a book, lately published by General Burgoyne, to explain and account for his misfortune. The perusal may amuse you; to make the work complete, methinks he ought to have given us in it his proclamation contrasted with his capitulation.

We are making great preparation here, intending an active and hoping for a successful campaign.

May God give us soon a good peace, and bring you

and I [*sic*] together again over a chessboard, where we may have battles without bloodshed. I am ever, with the highest esteem, dear sir,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLX

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON [1]

Passy, 5 March, 1780.

Sir:—I have received but lately the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me in recommendation of the Marquis de Lafayette. His modesty detained it long in his own hands. We became acquainted, however, from the time of his arrival at Paris; and his zeal for the honor of our country, his activity in our affairs here, and his firm attachment to our cause and to you, impressed me with the same regard and esteem for him that your Excellency's letter would have done, had it been immediately delivered to me.

Should peace arrive after another campaign or two, and afford us a little leisure, I should be happy to see your Excellency in Europe, and to accompany you, if my age and strength would permit, in visiting some of its ancient and most famous kingdoms. You would, on this side of the sea, enjoy the great reputation you have acquired, pure and free from those little shades that the jealousy and envy of a man's countrymen and contemporaries are ever endeavoring to cast over living merit. Here you would know,

[1] This is doubtless the letter which Lafayette had said would be extremely agreeable at headquarters. *Supra*, p. 181.

and enjoy, what posterity will say of Washington. For a thousand leagues have nearly the same effect with a thousand years. The feeble voice of those grovelling passions cannot extend so far either in time or distance. At present I enjoy that pleasure for you; as I frequently hear the old generals of this martial country, who study the maps of America, and mark upon them all your operations, speak with sincere approbation and great applause of your conduct; and join in giving you the character of one of the greatest captains of the age.

I must soon quit this scene, but you may live to see our country flourish, as it will amazingly and rapidly after the war is over; like a field of young Indian corn, which long fair weather and sunshine had enfeebled and discolored, and which in that weak state, by a thunder-gust of violent wind, hail, and rain, seemed to be threatened with absolute destruction; yet the storm being past, it recovers fresh verdure, shoots up with double vigor, and delights the eye, not of its owner only, but of every observing traveller.

The best wishes that can be formed for your health, honor, and happiness, ever attend you from yours, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXI

TO THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE [1]

Passy, 5 March, 1780.

Sir:—I received with great pleasure the letter you did me the honor of writing to me from Boston. I

[1] Successor to M. Gérard, as Minister from the French Court to the United States.

rejoiced to hear of your safe arrival, and that the reception you met with in my country had been agreeable to you. I hope its air will suit you, and that, while you reside in it, you will enjoy constant health and happiness.

Your good brother does me sometimes the honor of calling on me, and we converse in English, which he speaks very intelligibly. I suppose that by this time you do the same. M. de Malesherbes did me lately the same honor. That great man seems to have no wish of returning into public employment, but amuses himself with planting, and is desirous of obtaining all those trees of North America that have not yet been introduced into France. Your sending him a box of seeds would, I am persuaded, much oblige him. They may be obtained of my young friend Bartram, living near Philadelphia.

You will have heard that Spain has lately met with a little misfortune at sea, but the bravery with which her ships fought a vastly superior force has gained her great honor. We are anxious here for further news from that coast, which is daily expected. Great preparations are making here for the ensuing campaign, and we flatter ourselves that it will be more active and successful in Europe than the last.

One of the advantages of great states is that the calamity occasioned by a foreign war falls only on a very small part of the community who happen, from their situation and particular circumstances, to be exposed to it. Thus, as it is always fair weather in our parlors, it is at Paris always peace. The people

pursue their respective occupations; the playhouses, the opera, and other public diversions are as regularly and fully attended as in times of profoundest tranquillity, and the same small concerns divide us into parties. Within these few weeks we are for or against Jeannot, a new actor. This man's performance and the marriage of the Duke de Richelieu fill up much more of our present conversation than any thing that relates to the war. A demonstration, this, of the public felicity.

My grandson joins with me in best wishes for your health and prosperity. He is much flattered by your kind remembrance of him. We desire also that M. de Marbois [1] would accept our assurances of esteem. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXII

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON

Passy, 6 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I thank you for your political *Squibs;* they are well made. I am glad to find you have such plenty of good powder.

You propose that *Kill-pig*, the butcher, should operate upon himself. You will find some thoughts on that subject in a little piece called *A Merry Song about Murder*, in a London newspaper I send herewith.

The greatest discovery made in Europe for some

[1] Secretary of the French Legation in the United States.

time past is that of Dr. Ingenhousz's relating to the great use of the leaves of trees in producing wholesome air. I would send you his book if I had it. A new instrument is lately invented here,[1] a kind of telescope, which, by means of Iceland crystal, occasions the double appearance of an object, and the two appearances being farther distant from each other in proportion to the distance of the object from the eye, by moving an index on a graduated line till the two appearances coincide, you find on the line the real distance of the object. I am not enough master of this instrument to describe it accurately, having seen it but once, but it is very ingeniously contrived.

Remember me respectfully to your mother and sisters, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately, B. Franklin.

DCCCLXIII

FROM R. BERNSTORFF, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN DENMARK

Copenhagen, 8 March, 1780.

Sir:—Were you a person less known and respected, I should have been quite at a loss on the subject of the letter, which I have had the honor of receiving from you, which did not come to hand till the 31st of January. I should have considered it as a measure calculated to place us under a new embarrassment as painful as the first; but there is no fear nor

[1] By the Abbé Rochon, of the French Academy of Sciences.

risk with such a sage as you are, sir, generally respected by that universe which you have enlightened, and known for that prevailing love for truth which characterizes the good man and the true philosopher. These are the titles which will transmit your name to the remotest posterity, and in which I am particularly interested at the time, when the situation of affairs imposes on me the necessity of divesting myself of every public character, in writing to you, and only to aspire at appearing to you what I truly am, the earnest friend of peace, truth, and merit.

This mode of thinking not only decides my personal sentiments with respect to you, but also those I have respecting the unfortunate affair, which you have thought fit to mention to me, and which, from its commencement, has given me the utmost pain. You will readily agree with me, sir, in granting that there are perplexing situations in which it is impossible to avoid displeasing one party. You are too equitable not to enter into ours. There would be no consolation in such cases, nor would the persons who have been led into them ever be forgiven, were it not that opportunities sometimes present themselves of being heard, and preventing in future such essential embarrassments.

The Baron de Blome will speak to you in confidence, and with the utmost freedom on this subject; and, if my wishes can be accomplished, I shall be recompensed for all my pains, and there will only remain the agreeable recollection of having had the satisfaction of assuring you, from under my hand,

of that perfect esteem with which I have the honor of being, sir, etc., R. Bernstorff.

DCCCLXIV

TO CAPT. LANDAIS

Passy, 12 March, 1780.

Sir:—I received this day the two letters you did me the honor of writing to me, dated the 10th and 11th inst.

Having already twice answered very clearly and explicitly your demand about your things, it seems unnecessary to say any thing further on that head. I have written long since to Capt. Jones to deliver them to any person you may authorize to demand and receive them. If you please, you may give that authority to the agent you mention. I have also already often answered your demand of my procuring for you a passage to America.

M. de Chaumont having had the payment of all expenses in equipping the squadron, will, I suppose, have the payment of the prize-money. None of it will pass through my hands.

After the continual quarrels between you and the people of the *Alliance*, from the time of your taking the command of her at Boston; after the repeated written complaints made to me by you of the officers, and by the officers of you during all the time from your arrival in Europe to your departure on your last cruise; after having acquainted me in writing with your resolution not to continue in the command

with such officers, and expressing the same disposition in discourse to M. Chaumont; after being, as you say, four months in Paris, in all which time you never gave the least intimation of a wish to return to her, nor desired any thing of me relating to her but to have your things out of her, it is really surprising to be now told that the officers and crew like you for their captain, and that they hate their present commander—of whom, however, they have not made to me the least complaint;—and to have now for the first time a demand from you of being replaced in that ship, made only when you know she is just on the point of sailing. The demand, however, may perhaps be made chiefly for the sake of obtaining a refusal, of which you seem more earnestly desirous, as the having it to produce, may be of service to you in America. I will not, therefore, deny it to you, and it shall be as positive and clear as you require it. No one has ever learnt from me the opinion I formed of you from the inquiry made into your conduct. I kept it entirely to myself. I have not even hinted it in my letters to America, because I would not hazard giving to any one a bias to your prejudice. By communicating a part of that opinion privately to you it can do you no harm, for you may burn it. I should not give you the pain of reading it if your demand did not make it necessary. I think you, then, so impudent, so litigious and quarrelsome a man, even with your best friends, that peace and good order, and, consequently, the quiet and regular subordination so necessary to success, are, where you preside, impossible. These are matters within my observa-

tion and comprehension; your military operations I leave to more capable judges. If, therefore, I had twenty ships of war in my disposition, I should not give one of them to Captain Landais. The same temper which excluded him from the French marine would weigh equally with me. Of course I shall not replace him in the *Alliance*.

I am assured, however, that as captain of a merchant ship you have two very good qualities highly useful to your owners, viz., economy and integrity; for these I esteem you, and have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—I have passed over all the charges made or insinuated against me in your letters and angry conversations, because I would avoid continuing an altercation for which I have neither time nor inclination. You will carry them to America, where I must be accountable for my conduct towards you, and where it will be my duty, if I cannot justify myself, to submit to any censures I may have merited. Our correspondence, which cannot be pleasant to either of us, may therefore, if you please, end here.

DCCCLXV

TO JAMES LOVELL

Passy, 16 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—The Marquis de Lafayette, our firm and constant friend, returning to America, I have written a long letter by him to the President, of

which a copy goes by this ship. M. Gérard is since arrived, and I have received the despatches you mentioned to me, but no letter in answer to mine, a very long one, by the Chevalier de la Luzerne, nor any acknowledgment that it came to hand.

By the many newspapers and pamphlets I send, you will see the present state of European affairs in general. Ireland continues to insist on complete liberty, and will probably obtain it. The meetings of counties in England, and the committees of correspondence they appoint, alarm a good deal the ministry, especially since it has been proposed to elect out of each committee a few persons to assemble in London, which, if carried into execution, will form a kind of Congress, that will have more of the confidence and support of the people than the old Parliament. If the nation is not too corrupt, as I rather think it is, some considerable reformation of internal abuses may be expected from this. With regard to us, the only advantage to be reasonably expected from it is a peace, the general bent of the nation being for it.

The success of Admiral Rodney's fleet against our allies has a little elated our enemies for the present, and probably they will not now think of proposing it. If the approaching campaign, for which great preparations are making here, should end disadvantageously to them they will be more treatable; for their debts and taxes are daily becoming more burdensome, while their commerce, the source of their wealth, diminishes; and, though they have flattered themselves with obtaining assistance from Russia

and other powers, it does not appear they are likely to succeed; on the contrary, they are in danger of losing the neutrality of Holland.

Their conduct with regard to the exchange of prisoners has been very unjust. After long suspense and affected delays for the purpose of wearing out our poor people, they have finally refused to deliver us a man in exchange for those set at liberty by our cruisers on parole. A letter, which I enclose, from Captain Mitchell, will show the treatment of the late flags of truce from Boston. There is no gaining any thing from these barbarians by advances of civility or humanity.

Enclosed I send for Congress the justification of this court against the accusation published in the late English memorials. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXVI

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 16 March, 1780.

Sir:—The bearer of this, Captain Hutchins, a native of New Jersey, but many years in the English service, has lately escaped from England, where he suffered considerably for his attachment to the American cause. He is esteemed a good officer and an excellent engineer, and is desirous of being serviceable to his country. I enclose his memorial to me, a great part of which is consistent with my knowledge; and I beg leave to recommend him to

the favorable notice of Congress, when any affair occurs in which his talents may be useful. I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXVII

TO THOMAS BOND [1]

Passy, 16 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of September the 22d, and I thank you for the pleasing account you give me of the health and welfare of my old friends, Hugh Roberts, Luke Morris, Philip Syng, Samuel Rhoads, etc., with the same of yourself and family. Shake the old ones by the hand for me, and give the young ones my blessing. For my own part, I do not find that I grow any older. Being arrived at seventy, and considering that by travelling farther in the same road I should probably be led to the grave, I stopped short, turned about, and walked back again; which having done these four years, you may now call me sixty-six. Advise those old friends of ours to follow my example; keep up your spirits, and that will keep up your bodies; you will no more stoop under the weight of age than if you had swallowed a handspike.

I am glad the Philosophical Society made that compliment to M. Gérard. I wish they would do the same to M. Feutry, a worthy gentleman here, and to Dr. Ingenhousz, who has made some great

[1] A popular physician in Philadelphia.

discoveries lately respecting the leaves of trees in improving air for the use of animals. He will send you his book. He is physician to the Empress Queen. I have not yet seen your piece on inoculation. Remember me respectfully and affectionately to Mrs. Bond, your children, and all friends. I am ever, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I have bought some valuable books which I intend to present to the Society, but shall not send them till safer times.

DCCCLXVIII

TO SAMUEL COOPER

PASSY, 16 March, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received your kind favor by Captain Chavagnes, which I communicated to the minister of marine, who was much pleased with the character you give of the captain. I have also yours of November 12th, by your grandson, who appears a very promising lad, in whom I think you will have much satisfaction. He is in a boarding-school just by me, and was well last Sunday, when I had the pleasure of his company to dinner with Mr. Adams' sons and some other young Americans. He will soon acquire the language; and, if God spares his life, will make a very serviceable man to his country.

It gives me infinite satisfaction to find that, with you, the wisest and best among our people are so hearty in endeavoring to strengthen the alliance.

We certainly owe much to this nation; and we shall obtain much more, if the same prudent conduct towards them continues, for they really and strongly wish our prosperity, and will promote it by every means in their power. But we should at the same time do as much as possible for ourselves, and not ride (as we say) a free horse to death. There are some Americans returning hence, with whom our people should be upon their guard, as carrying with them a spirit of enmity to this country. Not being liked here themselves, they dislike the people; for the same reason, indeed, they ought to dislike all that know them. With the sincerest respect and esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately, B. Franklin.

DCCCLXIX

TO CYRUS GRIFFIN

Passy, 16 March, 1780.

Sir:—I have just received the letter you have done me the honor to write to me, and shall immediately deliver the packet it recommends to my care. I will take the first opportunity of mentioning to M. Gérard what you hint, relative to our not entertaining strangers so frequently and liberally, as is the custom in France. But he has travelled in Europe, and knows that modes of nations differ. The French are convivial, live much at one another's tables, and are glad to feast travellers. In Italy and Spain, a stranger, however well recommended, rarely dines

at the house of any gentleman, but lives at his inn. The Americans hold a medium. I have the honor to be etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXX

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, 18 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received your letter relating to the bullets of the engineer in Denmark, and shall write thither accordingly. I have also just received yours of the 13th. Mr. Ross writes to me that he finds a difficulty in passing the goods to you from L'Isle Noirmoutier. I do, therefore, now desire you, if practicable, to call at or off that island, in order to take them on board, their speedy and safe arrival in America being of the greatest consequence to the army. I have sent my despatches by Mr. Wharton, who set off yesterday morning. When they arrive, and you have got the cloth on board, I know of nothing to retard your proceeding directly to such port in North America as you shall judge most likely to be reached with safety. If in other respects equal, Philadelphia is to be preferred.

I wish the prize-money due to your people could be paid, before they go. I have spoken often about it. As to the prizes sent in to Norway, you know they were delivered back to the English by the court of Denmark. I have reclaimed them by a strong memorial, but have yet received no answer; and it is doubted whether we shall recover any thing, unless

by letters of marque and reprisal from the Congress, against the subjects of that kingdom, which, perhaps, in the present circumstances, it may not be thought proper soon to grant. The ships of war that you took are, I hear, to be valued, the king intending to purchase them; and the muster-roll of the *Bonhomme Richard* is wanting, in order to regulate the proportions to each ship. These things may take time. I have considered, that the people of the *Bonhomme* may want some little supplies for the voyage, and, therefore, if these proportions should not be regulated and paid before you sail, and you find it necessary, you may draw on me as far as twenty-four thousand livres to advance to them, for which they are to be accountable; but do not exceed that sum. I do this to prevent, as much as in me lies, the bad effects of any uneasiness among them; for I suppose that regularly all payments to seamen should be made at home.

A grand convoy, I understand, is to sail from Brest about the end of this month, or beginning of the next. It is of great importance to the United States that not only the *Alliance*, but the merchantmen that may sail under her convoy, should safely arrive there. If it will be convenient and practicable for you to join that convoy, and sail with it till off the coast, I wish it may be done. But I leave it to your discretion and judgment. I have no further instructions to give, but, committing you to the protection of Providence, I wish you a prosperous voyage, and a happy sight of your friends in America; being with great esteem, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXI

TO JOSEPH REED, PRESIDENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

PASSY, 19 March, 1780.

SIR:—I beg leave to introduce to your Excellency's acquaintance and civilities the Chevalier de Chastellux, Major-General in the French troops, now about to embark for America, whom I have long known and esteemed highly in his several characters of a soldier, a gentleman, and a man of letters. His excellent book on *Public Happiness* shows him the friend to mankind, and as such entitles him, wherever he goes, to their respect and good offices. He is particularly a friend to our cause, and I am sure your Excellency will have great pleasure in his conversation.[1] With great esteem and respect,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCLXXII

TO JOSEPH REED

PASSY, 19 March, 1780.

SIR:—I have just received the pamphlet you did me the honor to send me by M. Gérard, and have read it with pleasure. Not only as the clear state of facts, it does you honor, but as it proves the falsehood of a man who also showed no regard to truth in what

[1] The Chevalier de Chastellux came to the United States with Count de Rochambeau's army. After his return he published an account of his travels, in a work entitled *Voyages dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*. It was translated into English and German, and the title of Marquis was conferred on him.—EDITOR.

he said of me: "*that I approved of the propositions he carried over.*" [1] The truth is this: His brother, Mr. Pulteney, came here with those propositions; and after stipulating that, if I did not approve of them, I should not speak of them to any person, he communicated them to me. I told him frankly, on his desiring to know my sentiments, that I DID NOT *approve of them, and that I was sure they* WOULD NOT *be accepted in America.* "But," I said, "there are two other commissioners here; I will, if you please, show your propositions to them, and you will hear their opinions. I will also show them to the ministry here, without whose knowledge and concurrence we can take no step in such affairs." "No," said he, "as you do not approve of them, it can answer no purpose to show them to anybody else; the reasons that weigh with you will also weigh with them; therefore, I now pray that no mention may be made of my having been here, or my business." To this I agreed, and therefore nothing could be more astonishing to me than to see, in an American newspaper, that direct lie, in a letter from Mr. Johnstone, joined with two other falsehoods relating to the time of the treaty and to the opinion of Spain!

In proof of the above, I enclose a certificate of a friend of Mr. Pulteney's, the only person present at our interview; and I do it the rather at this time, because I am informed that another calumniator (the same who formerly in his private letters to particu-

[1] Alluding to a statement made by Governor Johnstone, one of the British Commissioners for treating with Congress. See *Remembrancer*, Vol. VII., pp. 8–18.

lar members accused you, with Messrs. Jay, Duane, Langdon, and Harrison, of betraying the secrets of Congress in a correspondence with the ministry) has made this transaction with Mr. Pulteney an article of accusation against me, as having approved the same propositions. He proposes, I understand, to settle in your government. I caution you to beware of him; for, in sowing suspicions and jealousies, in creating misunderstandings and quarrels among friends, in malice, subtility, and indefatigable industry, he has, I think, no equal.[1]

[1] The person here alluded to was Arthur Lee. The evidences of Mr. Lee's hostility to Dr. Franklin, and the justice of this censure, severe as it is, abounds in this correspondence.

"It seems to us," says a writer in the *North American Review*, "that there is another and much deeper cause of the settled enmity of Mr. Lee to Dr. Franklin, which he never pretended to conceal in conversation, or in writing to his friends, after he had been a few months in Paris. It is well known that all his interest, and that of his friends in Congress, were used to procure Dr. Franklin's recall from France, with the view of securing Mr. Lee's appointment in his stead. His letters were filled with censures of Dr. Franklin's conduct, boldly affirming his unfitness for such a station, and at all events recommending that, if it was impossible to effect his recall, he should be sent to an interior government, where he could do neither harm nor good. A few paragraphs from Mr. Lee's letters will set this subject in a clearer light. To Samuel Adams he writes, on the 4th of October, 1777: 'I have within this year been at the several courts of Spain, Vienna, and Berlin, and I find this of France is *the great wheel that moves them all.* Here, therefore, the most activity is requisite, and if it should ever be a question in Congress about my destination, *I should be much obliged to you for remembering that I should prefer being at the court of France.*' —*Life of Arthur Lee*, Vol. II., p. 113. Again, on the same day he writes to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, then in Congress: 'My idea of adapting characters and places is this: *Dr. Franklin to Vienna, as the first, most respectable, and quiet;* Mr. Deane to Holland; and the Alderman [William Lee] to Berlin, as the commercial department; Mr. Izard where he is; Mr. Jennings at Madrid, his reserve and circumspection being excellently well adapted to that court. France

I am glad to see that you continue to preside in our new State, as it shows that your public conduct is approved by the people. You have had a difficult time, which required abundance of prudence, and you have been equal to the occasion. The disputes about the Constitution seem to have subsided. It is much

remains the centre of political activity, and *here, therefore, I should choose to be employed.*'—P. 115. Again, to Richard Henry Lee: 'Things go on worse and worse every day among ourselves, and our situation is more painful. I see in every department neglect, dissipation, and private schemes. Being in trust here, I am responsible for what I cannot prevent; those very men will probably be the instruments of having me called to an account one day for their misdeeds. There is but *one way* of redressing this, and remedying the public evil; that is, the plan I before sent you, of appointing the Doctor, *honoris causâ*, to Vienna; Mr. Deane to Holland; Mr. Jennings to Madrid; *and leaving me here.* In that case I should have it in my power to call those to an account, through whose hands I know the public money has passed, and which will either never be accounted for or misaccounted for by the contrivance of those who are to share in the public plunder.'—P. 127. Here truly is a most persuasive argument for Congress to make Mr. Lee Minister to France. What a frightful picture is here drawn of the mismanagement, disorders, and distracted condition of the American affairs at that court, and what deplorable consequences must ensue, unless that '*one way*' is resorted to, of sending Dr. Franklin to the capital of Austria, and sending Mr. Lee to turn the '*great wheel*' at Paris; by the magical movements of which, under his control, an infallible remedy will be applied, and a radical reform suddenly effected!

"In another letter to Samuel Adams, the same alluring prospect is again held out, on the easy condition only of the same arrangement: 'If M. Lloyd is appointed agent, *Dr. Franklin sent to Vienna*, Mr. Deane to Holland, and *I am left here*, we shall all act in concert; and not only have a full inquiry made into the expenditure of the public money, but establish that order, decency, and regularity, which are lately banished from the public business at present, so as to involve us in continual confusion and expense.'—P. 137. Here we have the same modesty in the proposal, and the same temptation to comply with it." —*North American Review*, Vol. XXX., p. 505.

Mr. Lee wrote as follows to Mr. Lovell, then in Congress: "There is nothing of which I am more persuaded, than that Duane [a member of Congress from New York] is a secret, treacherous, and dangerous

admired here and all over Europe, and will draw over many families of fortune to settle under it as soon as there is a peace. The defects that may on seven years' trial be found in it can be amended when the time comes for considering them. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

enemy to the United States. If Congress are satisfied that, while from the feebleness of our marine the enemy's vessels of every description are plundering our commerce and our coast, one of our best frigates, the *Alliance*, should be kept upon a cruising job of Chaumont and Dr. Franklin, I shall be much surprised. I am sure that the latter would never have ventured to do so criminal an act, were he not resolved never to return to his country to give an account of his conduct, which, without some extraordinary conjuncture, or a total violation of justice, could not escape the severest condemnation."—Paris, November 5, 1779.

He criminated others, as well as Dr. Franklin. Relative to the transactions of Congress in the affair of Mr. Deane, after that Commissioner returned from France, he wrote: "There is, you may depend upon it, some deep design against our independence at the bottom. Many of the faction are, I know, actuated by the *desire of getting or retaining the public plunder;* but besides this, Duane, Jay, Morris, and others, *who were originally against our independence, have it certainly in view to bring us back to our former denomination.* Besides the invincible desire such men have of seeing their system triumphant, you know what offers of emolument and honors have been thrown out, as a reward for those who will effect this so much desired end for the king and his ministers. The same men who have been tempted by avarice to plunder the public, *have avarice, vanity, and ambition to tempt them to sell the public.*"—Paris, May 28, 1779.

Again, he wrote to J. J. Pringle: "So effectually have the seeds sown by the father of corruption here prospered both in Europe and America, that every thing yields to it. Dumas has been at Passy some weeks, but is not permitted to come near me. Sayre tells me his object is to get the agency for a loan into the hands of a French house. If he offers good *private* reasons, it will embarrass the good Doctor exceedingly, because the house of Grand, in whose hands it is at present, is in partnership with Deane (in which probably the Doctor may share), and, therefore, it will wound those honorable and friendly feelings which bind them together. As to the public, that is out of the question."—Paris, August 3, 1779.

Certificate referred to above

DEAR SIR:—I send you adjoined the certificate you desire, and am perfectly convinced, from conversations I have since had with Mr. Pulteney, that nobody was authorized to hold the language which has been imputed to him on that subject, and as I have a high opinion of his candor and worth, I know it must be painful to him to be brought into question in matters of fact with persons he esteems. I could wish that this matter may receive no further publicity than what is necessary for your justification. I am, etc., W. ALEXANDER.

PARIS, 19 March, 1780.

I do hereby certify whom it may concern that I was with Mr. Pulteney and Dr. Franklin at Paris, when, in a conversation between them on the subject of certain propositions for a reconciliation with America offered by Mr. Pulteney, Dr. Franklin said he did not approve of them, nor did he think they would be approved in America, but that he would communicate them to his colleagues and the French ministry. This Mr. Pulteney opposed, saying that it would answer no good end, as he was persuaded that what weighed with Dr. Franklin would weigh also with them; and therefore desired that no mention might be made of his having offered such propositions, or even of his having been here on such business, but that the whole might be buried in oblivion, agreeably to what had been stipulated by Mr. Pulteney, and agreed to by Dr. Franklin, before the propositions were produced, which Dr. Franklin accordingly promised. W. ALEXANDER.

DCCCLXXIII

TO M. DE SARTINE

PASSY, 20 March, 1780.

SIR:—In compliance with your Excellency's opinion expressed in the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 14th of October last, that I should send for Captain Landais to Paris to give an account of his conduct respecting the last engagement with the *Serapis*, wherein it had appeared to your Excellency, "that if the frigate *Alliance*, which he commanded, had seconded the *Bonhomme Richard* by engaging at the same time, the advantage gained by Commodore Jones would have been sooner obtained, have cost fewer lives, and not have left the *Bonhomme Richard* in such a condition as to sink in thirty-six hours after the combat," I immediately wrote to the said Captain Landais, acquainting him with that and other charges against him, and directing him to render himself here, and to bring with him such evidence as he could obtain and should think proper for his justification; and I wrote at the same time to the Commodore, acquainting him with this step, and directing him to send me the evidence he had to support the charges against Captain Landais, contained in his letters. Captain Landais, who had also himself desired of me to order an enquiry, was necessarily detained some time after in Holland, sundry accidents, such as the delay of Commodore Jones' expected proofs, and the indisposition at different times of myself and Captain Landais, have drawn the enquiry to a length unexpected, and after

all I find so much contradiction in the declarations of the parties and in the written evidence adduced in support of them, and such an insufficiency of marine knowledge in myself, when all the possibilities are to be considered of this or that manœuvre of a ship under the various circumstances of wind, tide, and situation, that I cannot presume, even if I had authority for so doing, to condemn the conduct of Captain Landais, or to advise the Congress to erase his name from the list of their sea-officers. His regular trial will be before a court-martial, consisting of a competent number of such officers, which can only be found in America; and to that I must therefore refer him. That court will judge how far he is chargeable with disobedience to orders, delay in coming to the assistance of the commodore, or neglect of taking the merchant ships. I will only venture to give your Excellency an opinion of mine in his favor, that his firing into that ship instead of the *Serapis*, if that fact should be found clear, could never have been the effect of design, but merely from accident occasioned by the night, or the natural spreading of shot, for though it appeared in the course of the enquiry that a mortal quarrel had arisen during the cruise between the commodore and him, human nature is not yet so depraved as to hazard the killing of many for the chance of hurting one; nor is it probable that if Captain Landais had given such orders his people would have obeyed them. All I can farther do is to transmit to Congress copies of the minutes of the enquiry with the papers produced, and to leave Captain Landais at liberty to return to

America in order to a trial. The enquiry, imperfect as it is, has, however, had one good effect, the preventing a duel in Holland between those officers, which might have proved fatal to one or both of them, and would at best have occasioned much inconvenient rumor, scandal, dispute, and dissension prejudicial to our affairs.

With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXIV

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 29 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I did receive the letter you mentioned to have enclosed for Mr. Carmichael in yours of the 25th of February. I had before received a letter from him, dated at Cadiz, acquainting me that he was just setting out for Madrid, and desiring I would send him a credit there for two hundred louis. Mr. F. Grand, our banker here, had undertaken to do this with his correspondent, a banker there. I, not knowing how to address your letter to Mr. Carmichael at Madrid, sent it to Mr. Grand's, to be put under his cover to his banker, who might deliver it to Mr. Carmichael, as he would necessarily find out his lodging, to acquaint him with the credit.

The day after Sir George Grand was gone for Holland his brother came to me, and expressing a great deal of concern and vexation, told me that Sir George, seeing that letter on his desk, said, this superscription

is M. Dumas' handwriting; and some time afterwards came to him with the letter in his open hand, saying, this letter is full of ingratitude (or some words to that purpose), and I will carry it to Holland and show it to the ambassador; and that he had accordingly carried it away with him, notwithstanding all that was or could be said to the contrary; that it gave him infinite pain to acquaint me with this action of his brother, but he thought it right I should know the truth. I did not mention this to you before, hoping that upon reflection Sir George would not show the letter to the ambassador, but seal it up again and send it forward; and I was desirous to avoid increasing the misunderstanding between you and Sir George. But, as I understood by yours to M. Boudoin, that he has actually done it, I see no reason to keep it longer a secret from you. If I had know it to be a letter of consequence, I should nevertheless have taken the same method of forwarding it, not having the least suspicion that any person in that house would have taken so unwarrantable a liberty with it. But I am now exceedingly sorry that I did not rather send it to the Spanish ambassador's. Let me know, in your next, what you may think proper to communicate to me of the contents of it. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXV

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 30 March, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I wrote to you yesterday, relating to the affair of your letter to Mr. Carmichael, that you

might know exactly the truth of the transaction. On reflection, I think it proper to add that what I wrote was for your satisfaction only; and that, as the making it public would give infinite pain to a very worthy man, Mr. F. Grand, who would then appear in the light of *délateur de son frère*, and it can serve no other purpose but that of vengeance on Sir George, and be of no advantage to you, I must insist on your generosity in keeping it a secret to yourself. In this you will also very much oblige me, who would by no means have my name publicly mentioned on this occasion; and I depend on your compliance.

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXVI

TO JOHN ROSS

Passy, 22 April, 1780.

Sir:—I duly received your favors of the 14th and 17th instant. I am sorry to understand from you that the woollens are in such a situation as to endanger their being lost to the States, but do not see why it should be expected of me to point out a vessel for them to be shipped in, or to approve or accept any contract you may make for the freight of them. The affair is yours. I never had any thing to do with it. I know nothing of it, and am quite sick of meddling, as I have been too often induced to do, with a kind of business that I am utterly unacquainted with.

If you like Messrs. Gourlade & Moylan's vessel

to send them in, and approve of their terms, but want my assistance to pay the freight, I will help you so far. Your retaining the sail-cloth, and linens, as a security for the payment of your advances, is what I suppose you have a right to do. I am sure I have none to make any objection to it; nor should I make any, if you thought fit to keep the cloth also. The long and fruitless attention you mention, without receiving relief from an order of Congress, which you suppose in my possession, was not occasioned by any fault of mine, since I never gave you any expectation of paying your balance, and have done all in my power that the order required of me. Indeed, I cannot find among the papers any order relating to your affairs. I wish to see a copy of that you mention. If I remember right, it was only an order that you should settle your accounts with the Commissioners here, which is done; not an order that they should pay the balance.

I thank you for your kind offer of carrying letters for me, and shall trouble you with a few; one to our friend Mr. Morris; and I heartily wish you a prosperous voyage.

I am exceedingly grieved at the discontents you mention among the people of the *Alliance*. Unforeseen accidents have occasioned delays in procuring for them their prize-money; but the exactest justice will be done them as soon as possible. I know not what the manœuvres are that you mention, which every American will ever consider as an insult offered to the United States. I am sorry to see, in some of our countrymen, a disposition on all occasions to

censure and exclaim against the conduct of this court against us, without being well acquainted with facts, or considering the many and substantial benefits we have received, and are continually receiving, from its friendship and good-will to us. With much esteem, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXVII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 23 April, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I am much pleased with the account you give me of the disposition with which the proposals from the Empress of Russia have been received, and desire to be informed, from time to time, of the progress of that interesting business.

I shall be glad to hear of your reconciliation with the ambassador, because a continuance of your difference will be extremely inconvenient. Permit me to tell you frankly, what I formerly hinted to you, that I apprehend you suffer yourself too easily to be led into personal prejudices by interested people, who would engross all our confidence to themselves. From this source have arisen, I imagine, the charges and suspicions you have insinuated to me against several, who have always declared a friendship for us, in Holland. It is right that you should have an opportunity of giving the *carte du pays* to M. Laurens, when he arrives in Holland. But if, in order to serve your particular friends, you fill his head with these prejudices, you will hurt him and them, and perhaps yourself. There does not appear to me the least

probability, in your supposition, that the ambassador is an enemy to America.

Here has been with me a gentleman from Holland, who was charged, as he said, with a verbal commission from divers cities, to inquire whether it was true that Amsterdam had, as they heard, made a treaty of commerce with the United States, and to express, in that case, their willingness to enter into a similiar treaty. Do you know any thing of this? What is become, or likely to become, of the plan of a treaty, formerly under consideration? By a letter from Middlebourg, to which the enclosed is an answer, a cargo seized and sent to America, as English property, is reclaimed, partly on the supposition that free ships make free goods. They ought to do so between England and Holland, because there is a treaty which stipulates it; but, there being yet no treaty between Holland and America to that purpose, I apprehend that the goods being declared by the captain to be English, a neutral ship will not protect them, the law of nations governing in this case, as it did before the treaty above mentioned. Tell me, if you please, your opinion. I am, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXVIII

TO THE JUDGES OF THE ADMIRALTY AT CHERBOURG

Passy, 16 May, 1780.

Gentlemen:—I have received the *procès verbaux*, and other papers you did me the honor to send me, agreeable to the eleventh article of the regulation of

the 27th of September, 1778. These pieces relate to the taking of the ship *Flora*, whereof was captain Henry Roodenberg, bound from Rotterdam to Dublin, and arrived at Cherbourg, in France, being taken the 7th day of April, by Captain Dowlin, commander of the American privateer, the *Black Prince*.

It appears to me from the above-mentioned papers, that the said ship *Flora* is not a good prize, the same belonging to the subjects of a neutral nation; but that the cargo is really the property of the subjects of the king of England, though attempted to be masked as neutral. I do therefore request that, after the cargo shall be landed, you would cause the said ship *Flora* to be immediately restored to her captain, and that you would oblige the captors to pay him his full freight, according to his bills of lading, and also to make good all the damages he may have sustained by plunder or otherwise; and I further request that, as the cargo is perishable, you would cause it to be sold immediately, and retain the produce deposited in your hands, to the end that, if any of the freighters, being subjects of their High Mightinesses the States-General, will declare upon oath, that certain parts of the said cargo were *bonâ fide* shipped on their own account and risk, and not on the account and risk of any British or Irish subjects, the value of such parts may be restored; or that, if the freighters, or any of them, should think fit to appeal from this judgment to the Congress, the produce so deposited may be disposed of according to their final determination. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXIX

NOTE FOR HIS EXCELLENCY, MONSIEUR LE COMTE DE VERGENNES

16 May, 1780.

When the *Alliance* frigate arrived in France, Mr. Franklin was desirous of employing her in annoying the English trade, and obtaining prisoners to exchange for the Americans who had long languished in the prisons of England.

A cruise with a small squadron, under Commodore Jones round the coast of Britain being about that time intended, Mr. Franklin was requested by his Excellency the Minister of the Marine to join the *Alliance* to that squadron. He cheerfully complied with that request, and in his instructions to Capt. Jones he encouraged him by the hopes of his being useful to his country in delivering so many poor prisoners from their captivity.

As the squadron acted under American commission and colors, was commanded by an American chief, and was thence understood to be American, our countrymen in the British prisons rejoiced to hear of its success, and that 500 English were made prisoners in the cruise, by an exchange with whom they hoped to obtain their liberty, and to return to their families and country.

The *Alliance* alone took vessels containing near 200 of those English prisoners. The *Bonhomme Richard*, which was manned chiefly by Americans, took in the *Serapis* a great part of the remainder.

The ambassador of France at the Hague applied to Commodore Jones for the prisoners in order to

execute a cartel entered into with the ambassador of England. Commodore Jones declined delivering them without orders from Mr. Franklin. The ambassador did Mr. Franklin the honor of writing to him on the subject, acquainting him that Mr. Jones had urged the exchanging them for Americans, and promising to use his endeavors for that purpose.

Mr. Franklin thereupon immediately sent the orders desired, expressing at the same time his confidence in the ambassador's promise.

The prisoners were accordingly delivered, but they were actually exchanged for French.

His Excellency M. de Sartine afterwards acquainting Mr. Franklin that he had not English prisoners enough at L'Orient to fill an English cartel then there, Mr. Franklin gave orders that forty-eight he had in that port should be delivered up for that purpose, thirty-eight others at Brest to be employed in the same manner.

Mr. Franklin was afterwards informed by M. De Chaumont that M. de Sartine had assured him that other English prisoners should be furnished to exchange for those so given up, in Holland and in France.

Mr. Franklin wrote accordingly to England, and a cartel vessel was thereupon ordered from Plymouth to Morlaix with 100 Americans. As soon as Mr. Franklin was acquainted with this he applied through M. de Chaumont to M. de Sartine for an equal number of English, who readily agreed to furnish them, and promised to send orders immediately to march 100 from Saumur to Morlaix.

The cartel arrived, landed the 100 Americans, but was sent back empty, with only a receipt from the commissary of the port, no English being arrived for the exchange.

Mr. Franklin has since received letters from England, acquainting him that he is charged with breach of faith, and with deceiving the board which had the charge of managing the exchange of prisoners, and a stop is put to that exchange in consequence.

The poor American prisoners there, many of whom have been confined two or three years, and have bravely resisted all the temptations, accompanied with threats, and followed by ill usage, to induce them to enter into the English service, are now in despair, seeing their hopes of speedy liberty ruined by this failure.

His Excellency M. de Sartine has kindly and repeatedly promised, by M. de Chaumont, to furnish the number wanted—about 400—for exchanging the said Americans.

But it is now said that the king's order is necessary to be first obtained.

Mr. Franklin therefore earnestly requests his Excellency M. Le Comte de Vergennes to support the proposition in council, and thereby obtain liberty for those unfortunate people.

DCCCLXXX

TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ADMIRALTY OF VANNES

Passy, 18 May, 1780.

Gentlemen:—By the declaration and report to me made by the Honorable Commodore Jones, a copy of which declaration I herewith send you, it appears to me that the British ship of war (the *Serapis*) therein mentioned to be met with, when convoying a fleet of the same nation from the Baltic and taken by the *Bonhomme Richard*, which was commissioned by the Congress and commanded by the aforesaid Commodore, is undoubtedly a good prize, being taken from the enemies of the United States of America. And I do accordingly hereby desire of you that you would proceed to the sale of the above said prize, in conformity to his Majesty's regulation of September 27, 1788.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXI

FROM LAROCHEFOUCAULD D'ENVILLE

La Rocheguyon, 22 May, 1780.

Sir:—The residence of your grandson at Geneva makes me hope that the citizens of that town may have some claim to your kind attention. It is with this hope that I ask it for two young men, whom the love of glory and liberty draws to America. One of them is named Gallatin; he is nineteen years old, well informed for his age, of an excellent character

thus far, with much natural talent. The name of the other is Ser. They have concealed their project from their parents, and therefore we cannot tell where they will land. It is supposed, however, that they are going to Philadelphia, or to the Continental army. One of my friends gives me this information, with the request that I will urge you to favor them with a recommendation. I shall share in his gratitude, and I beg you, sir, to be assured of the sentiments, with which I have the honor to be, etc.,

LAROCHEFOUCAULD D'ENVILLE.

DCCCLXXXII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

PASSY, 22 May, 1780.

SIR:—The Baron d'Arendt, Colonel in the armies of the United States, having expressed to me a desire of returning to the service in America, though not entirely cured of his wound, which occasioned his voyage to Europe, I endeavored to dissuade him from the undertaking. But, he having procured a letter to me from M. de Vergennes, of which I send your Excellency a copy herewith, I have been induced to advance him twenty-five louis d'ors towards enabling him to proceed. To justify his long absence, he intends laying before Congress some letters from William Lee, which he thinks will be sufficient for that purpose. With great respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCLXXXIII

FROM SAMUEL COOPER TO B. FRANKLIN

BOSTON, 23 May, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR:—I received some months past your letter from Passy, dated October 27, 1779, and lately a copy of it by the Marquis de Lafayette, who arrived here in the *Hermione*, with M. Corny. As the arrival of the Marquis diffused a general joy, every expression of it was given here that circumstances would allow, and particular respects paid by the government, as well as the people, to this prudent and gallant young nobleman, who keeps the cause of America so warm at his heart. In these respects M. Corny had his share, as well as Captain Latouche, commander of the frigate. The former, a gentleman of letters and great politeness, who acquired much esteem in this town in a little time, is gone on to head-quarters, and from thence to Congress; the latter, who offered the service of the frigate he commanded to the government of this State in the true spirit of the alliance, has just returned from a short cruise on our coast undertaken at the desire of the Council. He has visited Penobscot, taken a near view of the fort, made two British sloops-of-war commanded by Mowat, who burnt Falmouth, retire up the river, brought us an accurate plan of the fortress, and done every thing that time and circumstances would allow for our service. The presence of this frigate, under the command of so brave an officer, and so warmly affected to the common cause, will be of great advantage to the trade of this

State, and particularly to the supply of this town with wood, which has been at an exorbitant price since the enemy have taken possession of Penobscot. Such instances of friendship make the most agreeable impressions on the minds of the people here, and cultivate the alliance; and I cannot but observe with pleasure evident marks of the growing friendship between the two nations.

It is impossible, my dear sir, that I should ever lose the deep respect, and affection I have for you, *dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.* Your friendship has united two things in my bosom that seldom meet, pride and consolation; it has been the honor and balm of my life. It has much affected me, that the turbulence and uncertainty of the times, together with the weakness of my nerves, which has often unfitted me for writing, should occasion to your view any semblance of neglect. I confess, I have not written so often as my heart dictated; but I have written repeatedly. I have been the more concerned at the miscarriage of my letters, because they contained some things relating to the Count d'Estaing, for whom I have the greatest respect; whose great talents as a commander, whose intrepidity, vigilance, secrecy, assiduity, quick decision, prudence, and unabated affection to the common cause, united with a surprising command of himself in delicate circumstances, and on the most trying occasions (an instance of which we had at Newport), I can never sufficiently commend. I thought it ought to be known at the court of France, in what high estimation he was held here; but for

whose uncommon prudence, the alliance might have received, from the indiscretion of some among us, an early wound.

Mr. Bradford, to whom I commit the care of this letter, intended to have sailed directly to Holland, in his way to France: but the owners have altered the destination of the vessel first to Gottenburg. As another vessel will soon sail for France or Holland, I hope to write more particularly by that; and am, sir, with every sentiment of esteem and friendship, etc., SAMUEL COOPER.

DCCCLXXXIV

TO AN AGENT FOR AMERICAN CRUISERS

PASSY, 30 May, 1780.

SIR:—In my last, of the 27th instant, I omitted one thing I had intended, viz., to desire you would give absolute orders to your cruisers not to bring in any more Dutch vessels, though charged with enemy's goods, unless contraband. All the neutral States of Europe seem at present disposed to change what had before been deemed the law of nations, to wit, that an enemy's property may be taken wherever found; and to establish a rule, that free ships shall make free goods. This rule is itself so reasonable, and of a nature to be so beneficial to mankind, that I cannot but wish it may become general. And I make no doubt but that the Congress will agree to it, in as full an extent as France and Spain. In the meantime, and until I have received their orders on

the subject, it is my intention to condemn no more English goods found in Dutch vessels, unless contraband; of which I thought it right to give you this previous notice, that you may avoid the trouble and expense likely to arise from such captures, and from the detention of them for a decision. With great regard, and best wishes for the success of your enterprise, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXV

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 31 May, 1780.

Sir:—I wrote to your Excellency the 4th of March past, to go by this ship, the *Alliance*, then expected to sail immediately. But, the men refusing to go till paid their shares of prize-money, and sundry difficulties arising with regard to the sale and division, she has been detained thus long, to my great mortification, and I am yet uncertain when I shall be able to get her out. The trouble and vexation which these maritime affairs give me is inconceivable. I have often expressed to Congress my wish to be relieved from them, and that some person better acquainted with them, and better situated, might be appointed to manage them; much money as well as time would, I am sure, be saved by such an appointment.

The *Alliance* is to carry some of the cannon long since ordered, and as much of the powder, arms, and

clothing (furnished by government here), as she, together with a frigate, the *Ariel*, we have borrowed, can take. I hope they may between them take the whole, with what has been provided by Mr. Ross. This gentleman has, by what I can learn, served the Congress well in the quality and prices of the goods he has purchased. I wish it had been in my power to discharge his balance here, for which he has importuned me rather too much. We furnished him with about twenty thousand pounds sterling to discharge his first accounts, which he was to replace as soon as he received remittances from the Committee of Commerce. This has not been done, and he now demands another nearly equal sum, urging, as before, that the credit of the States as well as his own will be hurt by my refusal.

Mr. Bingham, too, complains of me for refusing some of his drafts, as very hurtful to his credit, though he owns he had no orders from Congress to authorize those drafts. I never undertook to provide for more than the payment of the interest bills of the first loan. The Congress have drawn on me very considerably for other purposes, which has sometimes greatly embarrassed me, but I have duly accepted and found means to pay their drafts; so that their credit in Europe has been well supported. But, if every agent of Congress in different parts of the world is permitted to run in debt, and draw upon me at pleasure to support his credit, under the idea of its being necessary to do so for the honor of Congress, the difficulty upon me will be too great, and I may in fine be obliged to protest the interest bills.

I therefore beg that a stop may be put to such irregular proceedings.

Had the loans proposed to be made in Europe succeeded, these practices might not have been so inconvenient; but the number of agents from separate States running all over Europe, and asking to borrow money, has given such an idea of our distress and poverty as makes everybody afraid to trust us. I am much pleased to find that Congress has at length resolved to borrow of our own people, by making their future bills bear interest. This interest duly paid in hard money, to such as require hard money, will fix the value of the principal, and even make the payment of the interest in hard money for the most part unnecessary, provided always that the quantity of principal be not excessive.

A great clamor has lately been made here by some merchants, who say they have large sums in their hands of paper-money in America, and that they are ruined by some resolution of Congress, which reduces its value to one part in forty. As I have had no letter explaining this matter, I have only been able to say that it is probably misunderstood, and that I am confident the Congress have not done, nor will do, any thing unjust towards strangers who have given us credit. I have indeed been almost ready to complain that I hear so little and so seldom from Congress, or from the Committee of Correspondence; but I know the difficulty of communication, and the frequent interruption it meets in this time of war. I have not yet received a line this year, and the letters written by the *Confederacy*, as I suppose

some must have been written by her, have not yet come to hand.

I mentioned in a former letter my having communicated to Mr. Johnson of Nantes, the order of Congress appointing him to examine the account, and his acceptance of the appointment. Nothing, however, has yet been done in pursuance of it; for, Mr. Deane having written that he might be expected here by the middle of March, and as his presence would be very useful in explaining the mercantile transactions, I have waited his arrival to request Mr. Johnson's coming to Paris, that his detention here from his affairs at Nantes might be as short as possible. Mr. Deane has not yet come; but, as we have heard of the arrival of the *Fendant* in Martinique, in which ship he took his passage, we imagine he may be here in some of the first ships from that island.

The medal for M. de Fleury is done and delivered to his order, he being absent; I shall get the others prepared as soon as possible, by the same hand, if I cannot find a cheaper equally good, which I am now inquiring after. Two thousand livres appear to me a great sum for the work.

With my last I sent a copy of my memorial to the court of Denmark. I have since received an answer from the minister of that court for foreign affairs, a copy of which I enclose. It referred me to the Danish minister here, with whom I have had a conference on the subject. He was full of professions of the goodwill of his court to the United States, and would excuse the delivery of our prizes to the English, as done in conformity to treaties, which it was necessary to

observe. He had not the treaty to show me, and I have not been able to find such a treaty on inquiry. After my memorial, our people left at Bergen were treated with the greatest kindness by an order from court, their expenses during the winter that they had been detained there all paid, necessaries furnished to them for their voyage to Dunkirk, and a passage thither found for them all at the king's expense. I have not dropped the application for a restitution, but shall continue to push it, not without some hopes of success. I wish, however, to receive instructions relating to it, and I think a letter from Congress to that court might forward the business; for I believe they are sensible they have done wrong, and are apprehensive of the inconveniences that may follow. With this I send the protests taken at Bergen against the proceeding.

The *Alliance*, in her last cruise, met with and sent to America a Dutch ship, supposed to have on board an English cargo. The owners have made application to me. I have assured them that they might depend on the justice of our courts, and that if they could prove their property there, it would be restored. M. Dumas has written to me about it. I enclose his letter, and wish despatch may be given to the business, as well to prevent the inconveniences of a misunderstanding with Holland, as for the sake of justice.

A ship of that nation has been brought in here by the *Black Prince*, having an English cargo. I consulted with Messrs. Adams and Dana, who informed me that it was an established rule with us in such

cases to confiscate the cargo, but to release the ship, paying her freight, etc. This I have accordingly ordered in the case of this ship, and hope it may be satisfactory. But it is a critical time with respect to such cases; for, whatever may formerly have been the law of nations, all the neutral powers at the instance of Russia seem at present disposed to change it, and to enforce the rule that *free ships shall make free goods*, except in the case of contraband. Denmark, Sweden, and Holland have already acceded to the proposition, and Portugal is expected to follow. France and Spain, in their answers, have also expressed their approbation of it. I have, therefore, instructed our privateers to bring in no more neutral ships, as such prizes occasion much litigation, and create ill blood.

The *Alliance*, Captain Landais, took two Swedes in coming hither, who demand of us for damages, one upward of sixty thousand livres, and the other near five hundred pounds sterling; and I cannot well see how the demand is to be settled. In the newspapers that I send, the Congress will see authentic pieces, expressing the sense of the European powers on the subject of neutral navigation. I hope to receive the sense of Congress for my future government, and for the satisfaction of the neutral nations now entering into the confederacy, which is considered here as a great stroke against England.

In truth, that country seems to have no friends on this side of the water; no other nation wishes it success in its present war, but rather desires to see it effectually humbled; no one, not even their old friends,

the Dutch, will afford them any assistance. Such is the mischievous effect of pride, insolence, and injustice on the affairs of nations, as well as on those of private persons!

The English party in Holland is daily diminishing, and the States are arming vigorously to maintain the freedom of their navigation. The consequence may possibly be a war with England, or a serious disposition in that mad nation to save what they can by a timely peace.

Our cartel for the exchange of American prisoners has been some time at a stand. When our little squadron brought near five hundred into Holland, England would not at first exchange Americans for them there, expecting to take them in their passage to France. But at length an agreement was made between the English and French ambassadors, and I was persuaded to give them up, on a promise of having an equal number of English delivered to my order at Morlaix. So those were exchanged for Frenchmen. But the English now refuse to take any English in exchange for Americans that have not been taken by American cruisers. They also refuse to send me any Americans in exchange for their prisoners released, and sent home by the two flags of truce from Boston. Thus they have given up all pretensions to equity and honor, and govern themselves by caprice, passion, and transient views of present interest.

Be pleased to present my duty to Congress, and believe me to be, with great respect, your Excellency's, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXVI

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 1 June, 1780.

Sir:—Commodore Jones, who by his bravery and conduct has done great honor to the American flag, desires to have that also of presenting a line to the hands of your Excellency. I cheerfully comply with his request, in recommending him to the notice of Congress, and to your Excellency's protection; though his actions are a more effectual recommendation, and render any from me unnecessary. It gives me, however, an opportunity of showing my readiness to do justice to merit, and of professing the esteem and respect with which I am your Excellency's, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXVII

TO ROBERT MORRIS

Passy, 3 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of March 31st, acquainting me with your having engaged in M. de la Frété's affairs, on my recommendation. I thank you very much, and beg you to be assured that any recommendation of yours will be regarded by me with the greatest attention. The letter you enclosed to M. Dumas is forwarded to him. We are impatient to hear from America, no account of the operations before Charleston, later than the 9th of March, having yet come to hand.

Every thing here in Europe continues to wear a good face. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland are raising a strong naval force to establish the free navigation for neutral ships, and of all their cargoes, though belonging to enemies, except contraband, that is, military stores. France and Spain have approved of it, and it is likely to become henceforth the law of nations, that *free ships make free goods*. England does not like this confederacy. I wish they would extend it still further, and ordain that unarmed trading ships, as well as fishermen and farmers, should be respected, as working for the common benefit of mankind, and never be interrupted in their operations, even by national enemies; but let those only fight with one another whose trade it is, and who are armed and paid for the purpose. With great and sincere esteem, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXVIII

TO DE NEUFVILLE & SON

Passy, 4 June, 1780.

Gentlemen:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 29th past, relating to certain bills drawn on Mr. Laurens, and requesting to know if I will engage to reimburse you if you in his absence accept and pay them. As I have received no order nor any advice relating to any such bills, know not by whom they are drawn, whether for private or public account, or whether they are true or

counterfeit, what quantity or value there are of them, nor, in short, any one circumstance relating to them, it would be inconsistent with common prudence for me to enter into any such general engagement.

All I can say is, that if they are really drawn by order of Congress, I make no doubt but care will be taken to place funds in time for the punctual payment of them. I thank you on behalf of the Congress for the readiness with which you kindly offer your service in the case. But I can say nothing further at present, to encourage your paying such bills. I have the honor to be with much esteem, gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCCLXXXIX

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 5 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—The gentleman, whose name you wished to know, in one of your late letters, is *M. Westhuysen, Echevin et Conseiller de la Ville de Harlem.* I shall probably send an order to that place for some of the types, of which you have sent me the prices, *before I leave Europe.* I think them very good and not dear.

A Dutch ship belonging to Messrs. Little, Dale, & Co., of Rotterdam, being brought into France as having an English cargo on board, I have followed your opinion with regard to the condemnation of the

cargo, which I think the more right, as the English have in the West Indies confiscated several of our cargoes found in Dutch ships. But, to show respect to the declaration of the Empress of Russia, I have written to the owners of our privateers a letter, of which I enclose a copy, together with a copy of the judgment, for your use, if you hear of any complaint.[1] I approve much of the principles of the confederacy of the neutral powers, and am not only for respecting the ships as the house of a friend, though containing the goods of an enemy, but I even wish, for the sake of humanity, that the law of nations may be further improved, by determining that, even in time of war, all those kinds of people who are employed in procuring subsistence for the species, or in exchanging the necessaries or conveniences of life, which are for the common benefit of mankind, such as husbandmen on their lands, fishermen in their barques, and traders in unarmed vessels, shall be permitted to prosecute their several innocent and useful employments without interruption or molestation, and nothing taken from them, even when wanted by an enemy, but on paying a fair price for the same.

I think you have done well to print the letter of Clinton; for, though I have myself had suspicions whether some parts of it were really written by him, yet I have no doubt of the facts stated, and think the piece valuable, as giving a true account of the British and American affairs in that quarter. On the whole, it has the appearance of a letter written by a general who did not approve of the expedition he

[1] See the letter to "An Agent of American Cruisers," *Supra*, p. 231.

was sent upon, who had no opinion of the judgment of those who drew up his instructions, who had observed that the preceding commanders, Gage, Burgoyne, Keppel, and the Howes, had all been censured by the ministers for having unsuccessfully attempted to execute injudicious instructions with unequal force; and he therefore wrote such a letter, not merely to give the information contained in it, but to be produced in his vindication, when he might be recalled, and his want of success charged upon him as a crime; though, in truth, owing to the folly of the ministers, who had ordered him on impracticable projects, and persisted in them, notwithstanding his faithful informations, without furnishing the necessary number of troops he had demanded. In this view, much of the letter may be accounted for, without supposing it fictitious; and therefore, if not genuine, it is ingeniously written. But you will easily conceive that, if the state of public facts it contains were known in America to be false, such a publication there would have been absurd, and of no possible use to the cause of the country.

I have written to M. Neufville concerning the bills you mention. I have no orders or advice about them, know nothing of them, and therefore cannot prudently meddle with them; especially as the funds in my power are not more than sufficient to answer the Congress bills for interest and other inevitable demands. He desired to know, whether I would engage to reimburse him, if he should accept and pay them; but, as I know not the amount of them, I cannot enter into any such engagement; for though, if

they are genuine Congress bills, I am persuaded all possible care will be taken by Congress to provide for their punctual payment, yet there are so many accidents, by which remittances are delayed or intercepted in the time of war, that I dare not hazard for these new bills, the possibility of being rendered unable to pay the others. With great esteem, I am, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCXC

TO DE NEUFVILLE & SON

Passy, 6 June, 1780.

Gentlemen—Since writing to you by yesterday's mail, I have received the honor of yours proposing to accept bills drawn on Mr. Laurens, if I will authorize you so to do, and accept your bill to equal amount. Having no orders about those bills, or even any advice of such being drawn, and knowing that the English have played many villainous tricks with our paper, I cannot think of giving power to another, who may be less acquainted with our American handwritings and printing, to accept bills which I have never seen, and, therefore, cannot judge whether they are counterfeit or genuine, and in this way make myself or the Congress accountable for unknown sums. I believe no prudent man would so expose himself or the government of his country.

I thank you, however, for the zeal and readiness you show to support our credit.

When Mr. Laurens arrives, he will doubtless accept

any good drafts made upon him, and accept them as of the date when they would have been presented, if he had been at Amsterdam when they were received, because this is just, and I make no doubt but they will be punctually paid as to loans in Holland. I believe the Congress have laid aside all thoughts of them, having fallen upon means of borrowing at home of their own people, by issuing paper-money bearing interest, which appears better and more advantageous to the country than paying interest abroad. You may see their scheme as resolved March 18th, printed in the *London Evening Post* of May 25th; and, having come to this resolution, I fancy they cannot have drawn many bills on Mr. Laurens.

With great regard, I am, gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCI

To Capt. Landais, late commander of the "Alliance," L'Orient

Passy, 7 June, 1780.

Sir:—I received yours of the 29th past, and after the manner in which you quitted the ship, my clear and positive refusal of replacing you, contained in mine of March the 12th, and my furnishing you with a considerable sum to enable you to go to America for a trial, I am surprised to find you at L'Orient when I thought you had long since been on your voyage; and to be told that "you had been waiting ever

since your arrival there for my orders, to retake the command of the *Alliance*," when I had never before heard of your being there, or given you the least expectation of the kind. The whole affair between us will be laid before our superiors, who will judge justly of the consistency and propriety of your conduct and of mine. I waive therefore any further dispute with you. But I charge you not to meddle with the command of the *Alliance*, or create any disturbance on board her, as you will answer the contrary at your peril. I am, sir, yours, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCXCII

TO THE LIEUTENANT JAMES DEGGE OF THE SHIP "ALLIANCE," AND THE OTHER OFFICERS OF THE SAID SHIP, AT L'ORIENT

PASSY, June 7, 1780.

GENTLEMEN:—I received your letter dated the 12th April past, expressing that you were in necessitous circumstances and that you were alarmed at having received neither wages nor prize-money when the ship was so nearly prepared for sea.

Having had nothing to do with the prizes, and understanding that they could not soon be turned into money, I had answered the purpose of your letter in the best manner in my power, by advancing twenty-four thousand livres, to supply the most urgent of your necessities, till the prize-money could be obtained. With regard to your wages, I thought the

expectation of having them paid here was wrong. Nobody in Europe is empowered to pay them. And I believe it a rule with all maritime states to pay their ships only at home, by an office where the accounts are kept, and where only it can be known, what agreement we made with the officers and men, what advances they have received, and what their families or attorneys may have received in their absence. I had many letters and informations from L'Orient, acquainting me with the discontent among the people of the *Alliance* at the method proposed of valuing the prizes in order to their being paid by the king; and that our ship would not possibly be got out, unless the method was changed and the prizes fairly sold at auction to the highest bidder. I then applied to have the change made, and it was readily agreed by the minister of the marine, that they should be so sold. But to sell them suddenly would again have been liable to objection; and therefore time was given in the advertisements, that distant purchasers of ships might know of the sale, and a greater number of buyers give a chance of a higher price, for your benefit. Had the first method been complied with, I am inclined to think, from his Majesty's known generosity, a better price would have been obtained—as similar instances have proved—than is likely to be got by the sale, and you would have had your money sooner. I consented to the change to satisfy and if possible please you. The delay was by no means agreeable to me, as it occasioned a great additional expense, and I heartily wished the ship in America.

I did, as you have heard, send a memorial to the court of Denmark, claiming a restitution of the prizes, or their value. This memorial was received long before they sailed from Bergen. They were nevertheless allowed to depart for England; and the only answer I have had from that court is, that the restitution was made in pursuance of treaties between the two crowns. I am not satisfied with this answer, but have laid the whole matter before Congress, desiring their instructions. You may be assured that not a penny of the value has yet been paid; and that if ever any thing is recovered while I am concerned in the business, strict justice shall be done you, which I have also no doubt will be done with regard to the *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough*.

Having received several letters from you formerly, complaining in strong terms of Capt. Landais' conduct in the government of the ship and his ill treatment of all the officers except the purser; and having received also from Capt. Landais himself a letter dated at L'Orient, May 15, 1779, in which he says you all joined together against him even before he left Boston; that he was promised another set, but being ready to sail, the Navy Board said your behavior would be better when at sea; on the contrary, it grew worse and worse, and was come to the pitch that he was compelled to acquaint me with it, that I might take a proper method to remedy it; and if no other was to be found, he would rather choose to leave the command than continue with such officers; after all this, it is a little surprising to me that Capt.

Landais, who came to Paris only to vindicate himself from some charges against him, and there voluntarily as I thought, and in pursuance of his former resolution, relinquished the ship, by desiring me repeatedly to give an order for taking out of her the things he had on board; and who, never once during all the time he stayed here, expressed the least wish or gave the least hint of a desire to be continued in her, till he heard she was upon the point of sailing, and that now he should demand to be replaced over you, and that you should wish to be again under his command. I know not how to account for this change. But having agreed to what I imagined from the letters on both sides would be agreeable to both you and Capt. Landais, and placed another captain in the ship, I cannot now comply with your request. I have related exactly to Congress the manner of his leaving the ship, and though I declined any judgment of his manœuvres in the fight, I have given it as my opinion, after examining the affair, that it was not at all likely either that he should have given orders to fire into the *Bonhomme Richard*, or that his officers would have obeyed such orders if he had given them. Thus I have taken what care I could of your honor in that particular; you will therefore excuse me if I am a little concerned for it in another. If it should come to be publicly known that you had the strongest aversion to Capt. Landais, who had used you basely, and that it is only since the last year's cruise, and the appointment of Commodore Jones to the command, that you request to be again under your old captain, I fear suspicions and reflections may be thrown upon

you by the world, as if this change of sentiment must have arisen from your observations during that cruise, that Capt. Jones loved close fighting, that Capt. Landais was skilful in keeping out of harm's way, and that therefore you thought yourselves safer with the latter. For myself, I believe you to be brave men, and lovers of your country and its glorious cause; and I am persuaded you have only been ill advised, and misled by the artful and malicious misrepresentations of some persons I guess at. Take in good part this friendly counsel of an old man who is your friend. Go home peaceably with your ship; do your duties faithfully and cheerfully. Behave respectfully to your commander, and I am persuaded he will do the same to you. Thus you will not only be happier in your voyage, but recommend yourselves to the future favors of Congress, and to the esteem of your country. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble servant, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCIII

TO JOHN JAY [1]

Passy, 13 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—Yesterday, and not before, is come to hand your favor of April 14th, with the packets and despatches from Congress, which you sent me by a French gentleman to Nantes.

[1] Mr. Jay was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain on the 27th of September, 1779, and arrived at Madrid in the following April.

Several of them appear to have been opened; the paper round the seals being smoked and burnt, as with the flame of a candle used to soften the wax, and the impression defaced. The curiosity of people in this time of war is unbounded. Some of them only want to see news; but others want to find, through interested views, what chance there is of a speedy peace. Mr. Ross has undertaken to forward the letters to England. I have not seen them; but he tells me they have all been opened. I am glad, however, to receive the despatches from Congress, as they communicate to me Mr. Adams' instructions, and other particulars of which I have been long ignorant.

I am very sensible of the weight of your observation, "that a constant interchange of intelligence and attentions between the public servants at the different courts is necessary to procure to their constituents all the advantages capable of being derived from their appointment." I shall endeavor to perform my part with you, as well to have the pleasure of your correspondence, as from a sense of duty. But my time is more taken up with matters extraneous to the functions of a minister, than you can possibly imagine. I have written often to the Congress to establish consuls in the ports, and ease me of what relates to maritime and mercantile affairs; but no notice has yet been taken of my request.

A number of bills of exchange, said to be drawn by order of Congress on Mr. Laurens, is arrived in Holland. A merchant there has desired to know of me whether, if he accepts them, I will engage to reimburse him. I have no orders or advice about them

from Congress. Do you know to what amount they have drawn? I doubt I cannot safely meddle with them.

Mrs. Jay does me much honor in desiring to have one of the prints, that have been made here of her countryman. I send what is said to be the best of five or six engraved by different hands, from different paintings. The verses at the bottom are truly extravagant. But you must know that the desire of pleasing, by a perpetual rise of compliments in this polite nation, has so used up all the common expressions of approbation, that they are become flat and insipid, and to use them almost implies censure. Hence music, that formerly might be sufficiently praised when it was called *bonne*, to go a little farther they called it *excellente*, then *superbe*, *magnifique*, *exquise*, *céleste*, all which being in their turns worn out, there only remains *divine;* and, when that is grown as insignificant as its predecessors, I think they must return to common speech and common sense; as, from vying with one another in fine and costly paintings on their coaches, since I first knew the country, not being able to go farther in that way, they have returned lately to plain carriages, painted, without arms or figures, in one uniform color.

The league of neutral nations to protect their commerce is now established. Holland, offended by fresh insults from England, is arming vigorously. That nation has madly brought itself into the greatest distress, and has not a friend in the world. With great and sincere esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCIV

TO M. WHARTON

Passy, 17 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—You obliged me very much in sending me Clinton's letter. I sent copies to England and Holland, where it has been printed. Some have doubted its being genuine. My answer is, that whether written by him or not, it contains in my opinion a true state of American and British affairs in that quarter. The Protestant mob in London, beginning soberly the 2d instant with the attendance on a petition to Parliament, on a refusal to take it into immediate consideration, proceeded to violence, treated ill several members, burnt several ambassadors' chapels, and being on the seven following days joined by all the *disorderly* rogues of the two cities, pillaged and destroyed the houses of Catholics and favorers of Catholics, to the number of near fifty; among them Lord Mansfield's house, with all his furniture, pictures, books, papers, etc., and himself almost frightened out of his wits. If they had done no other mischief, I would have more easily excused them, as he has been an eminent promoter of the American war, and it is not amiss that those who have approved the burning our poor people's houses and towns should taste a little of the effects of fire themselves. But they turned all the thieves and robbers out of Newgate to the number of three hundred, and instead of replacing them with an equal number of other plunderers of the public, which they might easily have found among the members of

Parliament, they burnt the building. It is said they also attempted to plunder the Bank. The troops fired on them and killed thirty-three. They were not finally suppressed till the 9th, at night; and then chiefly by the city associated troops. Lord George Gordon is committed to the Tower. Damage done is computed at a million sterling.

I thank you for yours of the 14th. I have letters signed by the very officers who now join Capt. Landais, complaining of his conduct to them in the strongest terms; and the like from him against them, declaring that he would quit the ship rather than serve with such a set. When he came up to Paris, which was only to explain his conduct, he had no desire, at least he expressed none to me, of returning to the ship, but on the contrary worried me for an order to have his things out of her, which I declined, because I would not do an act that should look like punishing him before he was tried by a court-martial, that could be only had in America. The separating him and his officers one would think should be a pleasure to him as well as to them, especially when it appeared his own act. His attempt, therefore, to resume the command after another was appointed, and when he had received a considerable sum, advanced to assist him in taking passage on another ship, in order to obtain a trial, and this by exciting a mutiny just when the *Alliance* was on the point of sailing, is not only unjustifiable but criminal. I have no doubt but your suspicion of his adviser is well founded.[1] That genius must either find or make a quarrel wher-

[1] Arthur Lee.

ever he is. The only excuse for him that his conduct will admit of, is his being at times out of his senses. This I always allow, and am persuaded that if some of the many enemies he provokes do not kill him sooner he will die in a madhouse. As to Capt. Landais, I have no other powers relating to the *Alliance*, than what are implied in my ministerial office. He was instructed strictly by the Admiralty in America to obey my orders. He disobeyed them. It is not necessary to discuss those matters here. We are accountable at home. I am heartily sorry that you have been so long detained. I have done everything in my power to prevent it. You can have no conception of the vexation these maritime affairs occasion me. It is hard that I, who give others no trouble with my quarrels, should be plagued with all the perversities of those who think fit to wrangle with one another. I wish you a good voyage at last, and that I could mend your company. Adieu, I am ever,

Yours affectionately,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCV

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL [1]

Passy, 17 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—Your favors of the 22d past came duly to hand. Sir John Dalrymple has been here

[1] Secretary to the American Legation at Madrid, while Mr. Jay was Minister there; and afterwards for many years *Chargé d'Affairs* of the United States at the court of Spain.—Editor.

some time, but I hear nothing of his political operations. The learned talk of the discovery he has made in the Escurial Library, of forty epistles of Brutus, a missing part of Tacitus, and a piece of Seneca, that have never yet been printed, which excite much curiosity. He has not been with me, and I am told, by one of his friends, that, though he wished to see me, he did not think it prudent. So I suppose I shall have no communication with him; for I shall not seek it. As Count de Vergennes has mentioned nothing to me of any memorial from him, I suppose he has not presented it; perhaps discouraged by the reception it met with in Spain. So I wish, for curiosity's sake, you would send me a copy of it.

The Marquis de Lafayette arrived safely at Boston on the 28th of April, and, it is said, gave expectations of the coming of a squadron and troops. The vessel that brings this, left New London the 2d of May; her captain reports that the siege of Charleston was raised, the troops attacked in their retreat, and Clinton killed; but this wants confirmation. London has been in the utmost confusion for seven or eight days. The beginning of this month, a mob of fanatics, joined by a mob of rogues, burnt and destroyed property to the amount, it is said, of a million sterling. Chapels of foreign ambassadors, houses of members of Parliament that had promoted the act for favoring Catholics, and the houses of many private persons of that religion, were pillaged and consumed, or pulled down, to the number of fifty; among the rest, Lord Mansfield's is burnt, with all

his furniture, pictures, books, and papers. Thus he, who approved the burning of American houses, has had fire brought home to him. He himself was horribly scared, and Governor Hutchinson, it is said, died outright of the fright. The mob, tired with roaring and rioting seven days and nights, were at length suppressed, and quiet restored on the 9th, in the evening. Next day Lord George Gordon was committed to the tower.[1]

[1] Lord George Gordon entered Parliament in 1774 and vehemently opposed the acts for the removal of Catholic disabilities. He took an active part also in organizing the Protestant associations of England and Scotland, of both which he was president. On June 2d, 1780, he headed the throng of people who marched in procession to the houses of Parliament with the monster petition in opposition to the Catholic disabilities acts. A riot ensued which lasted seven days, and which resulted in the destruction of several Roman Catholic houses of worship, the plunder of numerous private residences of Catholics, the firing of Newgate, the breaking open all the other prisons in London, and an attack upon the Bank of England and several other public buildings. It was finally checked by the soldiery at the expense of between four and five hundred persons killed or wounded. Pending the disturbance the sessions of Parliament were partially suspended. Gibbon writing to his mother on the 10th of June, the day after order was restored, said: "I should write with great pleasure to say that this audacious tumult is perfectly quelled; that Lord George Gordon is sent to the Tower, and that instead of safety or danger, we are now at liberty to think of justice. . . . Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June, 1780, will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism which I had supposed to be extinct, but which actually subsists in Great Britain perhaps beyond any other country in Europe."

There were rumors current in London that France was at the "bottom of it." Cowper in one of his letters asks: "Is it true that this detestable plot was an egg laid in France and hatched in London under the influence of French corruption?" Colonel Scott, then an American prisoner, told Lord Lincoln that the Americans were sick of the war and had only been buoyed up by Spanish gold and *French promises* that London would be burned. When the rioters were tried, however, nothing came out to confirm the suspicion of any plot or even

Enclosed I send you the little piece you desire.[1] To understand it rightly you should be acquainted with some few circumstances. The person to whom it was addressed is Madame Brillon, a lady of most respectable character and pleasing conversation; mistress of an amiable family in this neighborhood, with which I spend an evening twice in every week. She has, among other elegant accomplishments, that of an excellent musician; and, with her daughters, who sing prettily, and some friends who play, she kindly entertains me and my grandson with little concerts, a cup of tea, and a game of chess. I call this *my Opera*, for I rarely go to the Opera at Paris.

The Moulin Joli is a little island in the Seine about two leagues hence, part of the country-seat of another friend,[2] where we visit every summer, and spend a day in the pleasing society of the ingenious, learned, and very polite persons who inhabit it. At the time when the letter was written, all conversations at Paris were filled with disputes about the music of Gluck and Picini, a German and an Italian musician, who divided the town into violent parties. A friend of this lady having obtained a copy of it, under a promise not to give another, did not observe that promise; so that many have been taken, and it is become as public as such a thing can well be that is not printed; but I could not dream of its being heard of at Madrid! The thought was partly taken

plan having been formed. The king, however, seems to have entertained these suspicions. "If possible," he wrote to Lord North, "we must get to the bottom of it, and examples must be made."—EDITOR.

[1] The "Ephemera." See Vol. VII., p. 363.

[2] Monsieur Watelet.

from a little piece of some unknown writer, which I met with fifty years since in a newspaper, and which the sight of the "Ephemera" brought to my recollection. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCVI

TO COMMODORE JONES

Passy, 17 June, 1780.

Sir:—Having been informed by several gentlemen from L'Orient, that it is there generally understood the mutiny on board your ship has been advised or promoted by the Honorable Arthur Lee, Esq., whom I had ordered you to receive as a passenger, I hereby withdraw that order, so far as to leave the execution of it to your discretion; that if from the circumstances which have come to your knowledge it should appear to you that the peace and good government of the ship during the voyage may be endangered by his presence, you may decline taking that gentleman, which I apprehend need not obstruct his return to America, as there are several ships going under your convoy, and no doubt any of their passengers may be prevailed with to change places. But if you judge those suspicions groundless, you will comply with the order aforesaid. I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCXCVII

TO JOHN FOTHERGILL

PASSY, 19 June, 1780.

My dear old friend, Dr. Fothergill, may assure Lady H.[1] of my respects, and of any service in my power to render her, or her affairs in America. I believe matters in Georgia cannot much longer continue in their present situation, but will return to that state in which they were, when her property, and that of our common friend, G. W.,[2] received the protection she acknowledges.

I rejoiced most sincerely to hear of your recovery from the dangerous illness by which I lost my very valuable friend Peter Collinson. As I am sometimes apprehensive of the same disorder, I wish to know the means that were used and succeeded in your case; and shall be exceedingly obliged to you for communicating them when you can do it conveniently.

Be pleased to remember me respectfully to your good sister, and to our worthy friend, David Barclay, who I make no doubt laments with you and me, that the true pains we took together to prevent all this horrible mischief proved ineffectual.[3] I am ever yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

[1] Probably Lady Huntington, who contributed towards the establishment of Whitefield's Orphan House in Georgia. See a further account of her benevolent plans in *Washington's Writings*, Vol. IX., pp. 92, 96.

[2] George Whitefield.

[3] Alluding to the negotiations for bringing about a reconciliation between Great Britain and the colonies, which took place just before Dr. Franklin left England in the spring of 1775, and in which Dr. Fothergill, David Barclay, and Lord Howe were concerned. See Vol. VI., p. 435.

DCCCXCVIII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

PASSY, 22 June, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—Enclosed you have a letter for the gentleman you recommend to me. He seems to be a man of abilities. The words, "*before I leave Europe*," had no relation to my particular immediate intention, but to the general one I flatter myself with, of being able to return and spend there the small remains of life that are left me.

I have written distinctly to Messrs. de Neufville concerning those bills. I hear that —— was at Newbern the 12th of April, and soon to sail from thence, or from Virginia for France. Probably he might not sail in some weeks after, as vessels are often longer in fitting out than was expected. If it is the *Fier Roderigue*, a fifty-gun ship, that he comes in, I have just heard that she would not sail till the middle of May. Herewith you have the judgment relating to the *Flora*, which I thought had been sent before. The mischiefs done by the mob in London are astonishing. They were, I heard, within an ace of destroying the Bank, with all the books relating to the funds, which would have created infinite confusion.

I am grieved at the loss of Charleston. Let me hope soon to hear better news from the operations of the French and Spanish forces gone to America.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—As the English do not allow that we can make legal prizes, they certainly cannot detain the

Dutch ship, the *Berkenloos*, on pretence that it was become American property before they took it. For the rest, there is no doubt but the Congress will do what shall appear to be just, on a proper representation of facts laid before them, which the owners should appoint some persons in America to do. Those gentlemen may depend on my rendering them every service in my power.

DCCCXCIX

TO M. VAN DER OUDER MEULEN [1]

PASSY, 22 June, 1780.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 15th instant, containing the sketch of a plan for commerce with America, by establishing there and in Europe companies with privileges for that purpose, upon which you desire my sentiments.

I cannot from so small a sketch understand fully the extent of your plan; but I will mention what occurs to me in perusing it. There is no doubt but that merchants in Europe may, if they think fit, form themselves into companies for carrying on the commerce of America with such privileges as they can obtain from their sovereigns; but the general principle in America being for a free trade with all the world, and to leave every one of their merchants at liberty to prosecute it as he may judge most for his

[1] Endorsed as follows: "Papers and letters relating to a company proposed to be formed in Europe for the American trade."

advantage, I do not think such companies can be established *there* with any exclusive rights or privileges. And this open commerce being free to all nations, and more profitable to Europe than to America, which can very well subsist and flourish without a commerce with Europe, a commerce that chiefly imports superfluities and luxuries, it concerns those nations principally to protect that commerce, in which protection there is no doubt but France will bear her part. But that she should take the whole upon her, is too much to be asked or expected by America. We have, besides, a common opinion that business is best managed and to most advantage by those who are immediately interested in the profits of it, and that trading companies are generally more profitable to the servants of the company than to the proprietors of the stock, or to the public. I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCC

TO M. DE RAYNEVAL

24 June, 1780.

SIR:—The person who calls himself Dumont was with me yesterday evening, bringing notes to me from M. de Vergennes and M. le Duc de Vauguyon. He said his business was to solicit a supply of 4,000 stand of arms, to be landed on the west of England for the use of the petitioners, who were become sensible that petitioning signified nothing, and that

without using force it was impossible to prevent the total loss of liberty and the establishment of arbitrary government in England; that the appearance of 4,000 men in arms would be sufficient to draw together a great body from different parts, the whole nation being dissatisfied with the present government; that even the army was disaffected, and the navy so much so that Admiral Geary had been ordered to put to sea with the fleet, to prevent a revolt which was apprehended among the seamen. I mentioned the difficulty of landing such a quantity of arms in England without being observed, and troops sent to seize them or defeat the people that should undertake to use them before they could be disciplined, and that it was not probable such an aid could be obtained without its being well known whose hands the arms were to be put into, what persons of weight were likely to be concerned, and other circumstances that might satisfy there was a chance of success. He said all relating to the reception and use of the arms was already arranged; and persons of note concerned in the affair would discover themselves as soon as they could be assured of obtaining the supply; but otherwise it was dangerous and could not be expected. He desired me to forward and favor the business if my opinion should be asked, but made no particular offers or overtures to me. I do not know him. He asked my opinion of the design. I told him I could form none without knowing more particulars of it than he had communicated, and also the persons who were to conduct it. He said he was to see M. de Vergennes, and that he would call again

upon me after that interview. If he communicates any thing further worth notice, I shall immediately acquaint M. de Vergennes with it, to whom be pleased to present my sincere respects. I have the honor to be, with perfect esteem, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCI

TO MR. DIGGES

Passy, 25 June, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received yours enclosing a very obliging letter from Mr. President Banks. The Congress cannot be said to have ordered the instructions I gave, though they would no doubt have done it, if such a thing had been mentioned to them. It is therefore not proper to use any further endeavors to procure a medal for them. I do not indeed perceive that one is intended for me, as you imagined, and though it would certainly give me pleasure if voluntarily ordered, I would not have it obtained by solicitation.

I thank Mr. Hardy much for his kind offer of more Jamaica rum. But as I have still a great deal left of what he was before so obliging as to send me, a fresh quantity is unnecessary. I wish you would hint to me how I could make him some acceptable return.

The portrait you mention is not yet come to hand, nor have I heard any thing of it. I am anxious to see it, having no hope of living to see again the much loved and respected original.

I have at the request of friends sat so much and so often to painters and statuaries, that I am perfectly sick of it. I know of nothing so tedious as sitting hours in one fixed posture. I would nevertheless do it once more to oblige you if it was necessary, but there are already so many good likenesses of the face, that if the best of them is copied it will probably be better than a new one, and the body is only that of a lusty man which need not be drawn from the life; any artist can add such a body to the face. Or it may be taken from Chamberlain's print. I hope therefore you will excuse me. The face Miss Georgiana has is thought here to be the most perfect. Ornaments and emblems are best left to the fancy of the painter.

As the board after receiving the 500 English prisoners we carried into Holland, in exchange for Frenchmen, refused to take other Frenchmen—which the government had promised me—in exchange for Americans, I gave over all thoughts or expectations of continuing the cartel. I have, however, written to Mr. Hodgson about it by the opportunity. We are much obliged to that good man for the pains he has taken in that affair. Finding that the prisoners are like to be longer detained, I desire they may be paid from me the little comfort I can afford them of six-pence per week each. I will answer your drafts for the sums necessary.

I received Mr. Hartley's excellent letters, printed and manuscript, which I have sent to America, where he will ever be revered for his incessant endeavors to procure peace, which endeavors, however, I imagine he will find from the late success of the king's troops

at Charleston less attended to than they have been, and that desirable event more remote than expected.

I send you herewith the passport for Mr. Scott. I have, you see, great faith in your recommendation.

With great regard and esteem, I am, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

FRANCIS LYN.

DCCCCII

TO MR. WILLIAMS

PASSY, 27 June, 1780.

DEAR JONA.:—To get rid of all further projects and propositions which I never understand relating to the shipping of the goods, I entrusted you with that business and empowered you to freight a ship or ships. But I have not succeeded, for in yours of the 23d you send me new schemes. No other man-of-war to go under the command of Commodore Jones can at present be obtained. Assist him in getting out with the *Ariel;* after that you and M. de Chaumont may unite in finding some means of sending the rest of the goods. You and he can agree and assist each other; but there never can be any union of counsels or endeavors between the Commodore and him. I was told that if we would obtain the *Ariel,* she would do our business; I joined in the application and we obtained her. Now she is too little and another is wanted. I will absolutely have nothing to do with any new squadron project. I have been too long in hot water, plagued almost to death with

the passions, vagaries and ill humors and madnesses of other people. I must have a little repose. This to yourself, and believe me ever,

Your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—If the *Alliance* is not totally gone, you have enclosed an order which I promised the Prince de Montbarey to send down for her reception of more arms, etc., though I fear she will be carried into England either by her crew or by her enemy.

DCCCCIII

TO M. DE SARTINE [1]

Passy, 27 June, 1780.

Sir:—I am very thankful to his Majesty, in behalf of the suffering owners of the brigantine *Fair Play*, for his goodness in ordering to be paid to them fifteen thousand livres out of your treasury. But as that sum is conceived by your Excellency to be a favorable allowance, in consideration that the misfortune happened by the fault of Captain Giddins, and the owners apprehend there was no fault on his part (being so informed by deposition upon oath), and none was mentioned or supposed in the governor of Guadaloupe's first letter to your Excellency on the subject, I fear they will think the sum very small as an indemnification for the loss of their vessel, valued at six thousand pounds sterling.

[1] Minister of the Marine.

I therefore request your Excellency would be pleased to examine with some attention the said depositions, and the valuation (of which I enclose the duplicates); and if, on the whole, you should judge the matter improper to be offered at present for his Majesty's reconsideration, you would at least favor me with the informations that have been sent to your Excellency from Guadaloupe, of the blamable conduct of the captain, as by communicating those informations to the owners, I may more easily satisfy them of the favorableness of the sum his Majesty has been pleased to grant them.

Your Excellency will perceive by their letter, which I send herewith, that they desire Mr. Jonathan Williams of Nantes might receive for them the sum that should be granted. I am therefore further to request, that your Excellency would be pleased to give orders to your treasurer to accept and pay his drafts for the said fifteen thousand livres. I am, with great respect, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCIV

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES

Versailles, 30 June, 1780.

Sir:—I did not until this day receive the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 24th of this month.

You request, in consequence of an application made to you by Mr. Adams, that the orders given to

the Chevalier de la Luzerne relative to a resolution of Congress of the 18th of March last should be revoked, or at least suspended, as that plenipotentiary is able to prove that those orders are founded on false reports.

Mr. Adams, on the 22d, sent me a long dissertation on the subject in question; but it contains only abstract reasonings, hypotheses, and calculations, which have no real foundation, or which at least do not apply to the subjects of the king, and, in fine, principles, than which nothing can be less analogous to the alliance subsisting between his Majesty and the United States.

By this, sir, you can judge that the pretended proofs mentioned by Mr. Adams are not of a nature to induce us to change our opinion, and consequently cannot effect a revocation or suspension of the orders given to the Chevalier de la Luzerne. The king is so firmly persuaded, sir, that your private opinion respecting the effects of that resolution of Congress, as far as it concerns strangers, and especially Frenchmen, differs from that of Mr. Adams, that he is not apprehensive of laying you under any embarrassment by requesting you to support the representations which his minister is ordered to make to Congress. And that you may be able to do this with a complete knowledge of the case, his Majesty has commanded me to send you a copy of my letter to Mr. Adams, the observations of that plenipotentiary, and my answer to him.[1]

The king expects that you will lay the whole be-

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. V., pp. 208, 213, 232.

fore Congress; and his Majesty flatters himself that that assembly, inspired with principles different from those which Mr. Adams has discovered, will convince his Majesty that they know how to prize those marks of favor which the king has constantly shown to the United States.

However, sir, the king does not undertake to point out to Congress the means which may be employed to indemnify the French who are holders of the paper-money. His Majesty, with respect to that, relies entirely on the justice and wisdom of that assembly. I have the honor to be, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

DCCCCV

TO PAUL JONES

PASSY, 5 July, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received yours of June 21st, with the papers it enclosed, from M. Genet, who had kept them a day or two to translate them for the minister. I approve much of your humanity and prudence, but am sorry that in the letter to Dr. Bancroft you complain of your friends, who are in no fault. They spare you, and have not even hinted that if you had stayed on board where your duty lay, instead of coming to Paris, you would not have lost your ship. Now you blame them as having deserted you in recovering her. Though relinquishing to prevent mischief was a voluntary act of your own, for which you have credit, hereafter, if you should observe, on occasion,

to give your officers and friends a little more praise than is their due, and confess more fault than you can justly be charged with, you will only become the sooner for it, a great captain. Criticising and censuring almost every one you have to do with, will diminish friends, increase enemies, and thereby hurt your affairs.

I continue as ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCVI

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 10 July, 1780

Sir:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, dated June 30th, together with the papers accompanying it, containing the correspondence of Mr. Adams. I have taken some pains to understand the subject, and obtain information of facts from persons recently arrived, having received no letters myself that explain it. I cannot say that I yet perfectly understand it; but in this I am clear, that if the operation directed by Congress in their resolution of March the 18th occasions, from the necessity of the case, some inequality of justice, that inconvenience ought to fall wholly on the inhabitants of the States, who reap with it the advantages obtained by the measure; and that the greatest care should be taken that foreign merchants, particularly the French, who are our creditors, do not suffer by it. This I am so confident the Congress will do, that

I do not think any representations of mine necessary to persuade them to it.

I shall not fail, however, to lay the whole before them; and I beg that the king may be assured that their sentiments, and those of the Americans in general, with regard to the alliance, as far as I have been able to learn them, not only from private letters, but from authentic public facts, differ widely from those that seem to be expressed by Mr. Adams in his letter to your Excellency, and are filled with the strongest impressions of the friendship of France, of the generous manner in which his Majesty was pleased to enter into an equal treaty with us, and of the great obligations our country is under for the important aids he has since afforded us. I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCVII

TO ALEXANDER SMALL [1]

Passy, 22 July, 1780.

You see, my dear sir, that I was not afraid my masters would take it amiss, if I ran to see an old friend, though in the service of their enemy. They are reasonable enough to allow, that differing politics should not prevent the intercommunication of philosophers, who study and converse for the benefit of mankind. But you have doubts about coming to

[1] A surgeon of eminence in the British army, then passing through Paris; brother to Colonel Small, who particularly distinguished himself by his humanity at the battle of Bunker's Hill, near Boston.—W. T. F.

dine with me. I suppose you will not venture it; your refusal will not indeed do so much honor to the generosity and good nature of your government, as to your sagacity. You know your people, and I do not expect you. I think, too, that in friendship I ought not to make you more visits, as I intended; but I send my grandson to pay his duty to his physician.

You inquired about my gout, and I forgot to acquaint you that I had treated it a little cavalierly in its two last accesses. Finding one night that my foot gave me more pain after it was covered warm in bed, I put it out of bed naked; and, perceiving it easier, I let it remain longer than I at first designed, and at length fell asleep, leaving it there till morning. The pain did not return, and I grew well. Next winter, having a second attack, I repeated the experiment; not with such immediate success in dismissing the gout, but constantly with the effect of rendering it less painful, so that it permitted me to sleep every night. I should mention that it was my son who gave me the first intimation of this practice. He being in the old opinion, that the gout was to be drawn out by transpiration; and having heard me say, that perspiration was carried on more copiously when the body was naked than when clothed, he put his foot out of bed to increase that discharge, and found ease by it, which he thought a confirmation of the doctrine. But this method requires to be confirmed by more experiments, before one can conscientiously recommend it. I give it you, however, in exchange for your receipt of tartar emetic;

because the commerce of philosophy as well as other commerce, is best promoted by taking care to make returns. I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCVIII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 26 July, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I wrote to Messrs. de Neufville by the last post, in answer to theirs of the 14th. I hope they received my letter. It signified, that I could accept the bills drawn on Mr. Laurens. I find by a vote of Congress on the 4th March, that they then stopped drawing, and I am informed no more bills have been issued since. I could not relish those gentlemen's proposal of mortgaging *all our estates*, for the little money Holland is likely to lend us. But I am obliged to them for their zeal in our cause.

I received, and thank you for, the protest relating to the election of the coadjutor. You seem to be too much affected with the taking of Charleston. It is so far a damage to us, as it will enable the enemy to exchange a great part of the prisoners we had in our hands; otherwise their affairs will not be much advanced by it. They have successively been in possession of the capitals of five provinces, viz., Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New York, and Georgia; but were not therefore in possession of the provinces themselves. New York and Georgia still continue their operations as free States;

and so I suppose will South Carolina. The cannon will be recovered with the place; if not, our furnaces are constantly at work in making more. The destroying of our ships by the English is only like shaving our beards, which will grow again. Their loss of provinces is like the loss of a limb, which can never again be united to their body. I was sorry to hear of your indisposition. Take care of yourself. Honey is a good thing for obstructions in the reins. I hope your health is by this time re-established.

I am less committed than you imagine in the affair between Jones and Landais. The latter was not dispossessed by me of his command, but quitted it. He afterwards took it into his head to resume it, which the former's too long stay at Paris gave him an opportunity of effecting. Captain Jones is going in the *Ariel* frigate to America, where they may settle their affairs as they can.

The captain commandant of Dunkirk, who occasioned the loss of our despatches, is himself taken by the English. I have no doubt of the truth of what Mr. White told you, about the facility with which the tax was collected.

The same Baron de Wulffen has not pleased me, having left little debts behind him unpaid, though I furnished him with twenty guineas. As he had been with his brother at Venloo, before he saw you, where he might get money, I wonder at his borrowing of you.

This will be delivered to you by his Excellency, John Adams, whom I earnestly recommend to your best civilities. He has never been in Holland, and

your counsels will be of use to him. My best wishes attend you, being ever, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCIX

TO DE VERGENNES

Passy, 3 August, 1780.

Sir:—It was indeed with very great pleasure that I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing me, communicating that of the President of Congress, and the resolutions of that body relative to the succors then expected; for the sentiments therein expressed are so different from the language held by Mr. Adams in his late letters to your Excellency as to make it clear that it was from his particular indiscretion alone, and not from any instructions received by him, that has given such just cause of displeasure, and that it is impossible that his conduct therein should be approved by his constituents. I am glad he has not admitted me to any participation of those writings, and that he has taken the resolution he expresses, of not communicating with me, or making use of my intervention in his future correspondence; a resolution that I believe he will keep, as he has never yet communicated to me more of his business in Europe than I have seen in the newspapers. I live upon terms of civility with him, not of intimacy. I shall as you desire lay before Congress the whole correspondence which you have sent me for that purpose. With the greatest and most sincere respect, I am, sir, yours, etc., etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCX

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 9 August, 1780.

Sir:—With this your Excellency will receive a copy of my last, dated May 31st, the original of which, with copies of preceding letters, went by the *Alliance*, Captain Landais, who sailed the beginning of last month, and who I wish may arrive safe in America, being apprehensive that by her long delay in port, from the mutiny of the people, who after she was ready to sail refused to weigh anchor till their wages were paid, she may fall in the way of the English fleet now out; or that her crew, who have ever been infected with disorder and mutiny, may carry her into England. She had, on her first coming out, a conspiracy for that purpose; besides which her officers and captain quarrelled with each other, the captain with Commodore Jones, and there have been so many broils among them, that it was impossible to get the business forward while she stayed, and she is at length gone, without taking the quantity of stores she was capable of taking, and was ordered to take.

I suppose the conduct of that captain will be inquired into by a court-martial. Captain Jones goes home in the *Ariel*, a ship we have borrowed of government here, and carries one hundred and forty-six chests of arms, and four hundred barrels of powder. To take the rest of the stores, I have been obliged to freight a ship, which, being well armed and well manned, will, I hope, get in safe. The clothes for

ten thousand men are, I think, all made up; there are also arms for fifteen thousand, new and good, with two thousand barrels of powder. Besides this, there is a great quantity of cloth I have bought, of which you will have the invoices sent by Mr. Williams; another large quantity purchased by Mr. Ross; all going in the same ship.[1]

[1] Captain Landais had been censured and deprived of his command, in consequence of his misconduct while on the cruise with Jones at the time of the capture of the *Serapis*. When Jones was about to depart in the *Alliance* for America, in June, 1780, Landais went to L'Orient without orders, raised a mutiny among the officers and sailors, in consequence of their not having been paid their prize-money, and took command of the ship while Jones was absent. An order was obtained from the French government to arrest Landais, but he sailed before the order arrived. Arthur Lee was a passenger in the *Alliance*, and advised Landais to resist the authority of Jones, and take command of the vessel. The passengers had reason to regret this rash measure, however, before they reached Boston, to which port they were bound. Landais behaved in so strange a manner, that it was found necessary to deprive him of his command, and to put the vessel under the charge of the first lieutenant. In a letter to Robert Morris, dated at L'Orient, June 27th, Jones speaks of this affair as follows:

"What gives me the greatest pain is, that, after I had obtained from the government, the means of transporting to America, under a good protection, the arms and clothing I had already mentioned, Mr. Lee should have found means to defeat my intentions. I thank God I am of no party, and have no brothers or relations to serve; but I am convinced that Mr. Lee has acted in this matter merely because I would not become the enemy of the venerable, the wise, and the good Franklin, whose heart, as well as head, does and will always do honor to human nature. I know the great and good in this kingdom better, perhaps, than any other American, who has appeared in Europe since the treaty of alliance; and, if my testimony could add any thing to Franklin's reputation, I could witness the universal veneration and esteem with which his name inspires all ranks, not only at Versailles, and all over this kingdom, but also in Spain and Holland. And I can add, from the testimony of the first characters of other nations, that with them envy itself is dumb when the name of Franklin is but mentioned."—See *Life of Paul Jones*, New York ed., 1833, pp. 261–279.

The little authority we have here to govern our armed ships, and the inconvenience of distance from the ports, occasion abundance of irregularities in the conduct of both men and officers. I hope, therefore, that no more of those vessels will be sent hither, till our code of laws is perfected respecting ships abroad, and proper persons appointed to manage such affairs in the seaports. They give me infinite trouble; and, though I endeavor to act for the best, it is without satisfaction to myself, being unacquainted with that kind of business. I have often mentioned the appointment of a consul or consuls. The Congress have, perhaps, not yet had time to consider that matter.

Having already sent you, by different conveyances, copies of my proceedings with the court of Denmark, relative to the three prizes delivered up to the English, and requested the instructions of Congress, I hope soon to receive them. I mentioned a letter from the Congress to that court, as what I thought might have a good effect. I have since had more reasons to be of that opinion.

The unexpected delay of Mr. Deane's arrival has retarded the settlement of the joint accounts of the Commission, he having had the chief management of the commercial part, and being therefore best able to explain difficulties. I have just now the pleasure to hear that the *Fier Roderigue*, with the convoy from Virginia, arrived at Bordeaux, all safe except one tobacco ship, that foundered at sea, the men saved; and I have a letter from Mr. Deane that he is at Rochelle, proposes to stop a few days at Nantes, and

then proceed to Paris, when I shall endeavor to see that business completed with all possible expedition.

Mr. Adams has given offence to the court here, by some sentiments and expressions contained in several of his letters written to the Count de Vergennes. I mention this with reluctance, though perhaps it would have been my duty to acquaint you with such a circumstance, even were it not required of me by the minister himself. He has sent me copies of the correspondence, desiring I would communicate them to Congress; and I send them herewith.[1] Mr. Adams did not show me his letters before he sent them. I have, in a former letter to Mr. Lovell, mentioned some of the inconveniences that attend the having more than one minister at the same court; one of which inconveniences is, that they do not always hold the same language, and that the impressions made by one, and intended for the service of his constituents, may be effaced by the discourse of the other. It is true that Mr. Adams' proper business is elsewhere; but the time not being come for that business, and having nothing else wherewith to employ himself, he seems to have endeavored to supply what he may suppose my negotiations defective in. He thinks, as he tells me himself, that America has been too free in expressions of gratitude to France; for that she is more obliged to us than we to her; and that we should show spirit in our applications. I apprehend that he mistakes his ground, and that this court is to be treated with decency and

[1] These letters will be found in the fifth volume of the *Diplomatic Correspondence*.

delicacy. The king, a young and virtuous prince, has, I am persuaded, a pleasure in reflecting on the generous benevolence of the action in assisting an oppressed people, and proposes it as a part of the glory of his reign. I think it right to increase this pleasure by our thankful acknowledgments, and that such an expression of gratitude is not only our duty, but our interest. A different conduct seems to me what is not only improper and unbecoming, but what may be hurtful to us. Mr. Adams, on the other hand, who, at the same time, means our welfare and interest as much as I, or any man, can do, seems to think a little apparent stoutness, and a greater air of independence and boldness in our demands, will procure us more ample assistance. It is for Congress to judge and regulate their affairs accordingly.

M. de Vergennes, who appears much offended, told me, yesterday, that he would enter into no further discussions with Mr. Adams, nor answer any more of his letters. He has gone to Holland to try, as he told me, whether something might not be done to render us less dependent on France. He says the ideas of this court and those of the people of America are so totally different, that it is impossible for any minister to please both. He ought to know America better than I do, having been there lately, and he may choose to do what he thinks will best please the people of America. But when I consider the expressions of Congress in many of their public acts, and particularly in their letter to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, of the 24th of May last, I cannot but imagine that he mistakes the sentiments of a few for

the general opinion. It is my intention, while I stay here, to procure what advantages I can for our country, by endeavoring to please this court; and I wish I could prevent any thing being said by any of our countrymen here that may have a contrary effect, and increase an opinion lately showing itself in Paris, that we seek a difference, and with a view of reconciling ourselves to England. Some of them have of late been very indiscreet in their conversations.

I have received, eight months after their date, the instructions of Congress relating to a new article for guaranteeing the fisheries. The expected negotiations for a peace appearing of late more remote, and being too much occupied with other affairs, I have not hitherto proposed that article. But I purpose doing it next week. It appears so reasonable and equitable, that I do not foresee any difficulty. In my next, I shall give you an account of what passes on the occasion.

The silver medal ordered by the Chevalier de Fleury, has been delivered to his order here, he being gone to America. The others, for Brigadier-General Wayne and Colonel Stewart, I shall send by the next good opportunity.

The two thousand pounds I furnished to Messrs. Adams and Jay, agreeably to an order of Congress, for themselves and secretaries, being nearly expended and no supplies to them arriving, I have thought it my duty to furnish them with further sums, hoping the supplies promised will soon arrive to reimburse me, and enable me to pay the bills

drawn on Mr. Laurens in Holland, which I have engaged for, to save the public credit, the holders of those bills threatening otherwise to protest them. Messrs. de Neufville of Amsterdam had accepted some of them. I have promised those gentlemen to provide for the payment before they become due, and to accept such others as shall be presented to me. I hear, and hope it is true, that the drawing of such bills is stopped, and that their number and value is not very great.

The bills drawn in favor of M. de Beaumarchais for the interest of his debt are paid.

The German prince, who gave me a proposal some months since for furnishing troops to the Congress, has lately desired an answer. I gave no expectation that it was likely you would agree to such a proposal; but, being pressed to send it to you, it went with some of my former letters.

M. Fouquet, who was employed by Congress to instruct people in making gunpowder, is arrived here, after a long passage; he has requested me to transmit a memorial to Congress, which I do, enclosed.

The great public event in Europe of this year is the proposal by Russia, of an armed neutrality for protecting the liberty of commerce. The proposition is accepted now by most of the maritime powers. As it is likely to become the law of nations, *that free ships should make free goods*, I wish the Congress to consider whether it may not be proper to give orders to their cruisers not to molest foreign ships, but conform to the spirit of that treaty of neutrality.

The English have been much elated with their suc-

cess at Charleston. The late news of the junction of the French and Spanish fleets has a little abated their spirits; and I hope that junction, and the arrival of the French troops and ships in North America, will soon produce news that may afford us also in our turn some satisfaction.

Application has been made to me here, requesting that I would solicit Congress to permit the exchange of William John Mawhood, a lieutenant in the Seventeenth Regiment, taken prisoner at Stony Point, July 15, 1779, and confined near Philadelphia; or, if the exchange cannot conveniently be made, that he may be permitted to return to England on his parole. By doing this at my request, the Congress will enable me to oblige several friends of ours, who are persons of merit and distinction in this country.

Be pleased, sir, to present my duty to Congress, and believe me to be, with great respect, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—A similar application has been made to me in favor of Richard Croft, lieutenant in the Twentieth Regiment, a prisoner at Charlottesville. I shall be much obliged by any kindness shown to that young gentleman, and so will some friends of ours in England, who respect his father. B. F.

DCCCCXI

TO JAMES LOVELL

PASSY, 10 August, 1780.

SIR:—I received on the 12th of June, 1780, copies of your several favors of April the 29th, 1779, June the 13th, 1779, July the 9th and 16th, August and September the 16th, 1779. You will see by this what delays our correspondence sometimes meets with. I have lately received two of fresher date, viz. February the 24th, and May the 4th. I thank you much for the newspapers and journals you have from time to time sent me; I endeavor to make full returns in the same way. I could furnish a multitude of despatches with confidential informations taken out of the papers I send you, if I chose to deal in that kind of manufacture; I know the whole art of it, for I have had several volunteer correspondents in England, who have in their letters for years together communicated to me secrets of state, extracted from the newspapers, which sometimes came to hand in those papers by the same post, and sometimes by the post before. You and I send the papers themselves. Our letters may appear the leaner, but what fat they have is their own.

I wrote to you the 17th of October, and the 16th of March, and have sent duplicates, some of which I hope got to hand. You mention receiving one of September the 30th, and one of December 30th, but not that of October the 17th. The cipher you have communicated, either from some defect of your explanation, or in my comprehension, is not yet of use

to me; for I cannot understand by it the little specimen you have written in it. If you have that of Mr. Dumas, which I left with Mr. Morris, we may correspond by it when a few sentences are required only to be written in cipher, but it is too tedious for a whole letter.

I send herewith copies of the instruments annulling the eleventh and twelfth articles of the treaty.[1] The treaty printed here by the court omitted them, and numbered the subsequent articles accordingly.

I write fully to the President. The frequent hindrances the Committee of Correspondence meet with in writing as a committee, which appear from the excuses in your particular letters, and the many parts of my letters that have long been unanswered, incline me to think that your foreign correspondence would be best managed by one secretary, who could write when he had an opportunity, without waiting for the concurrence or opinions of his brethren, who cannot always be got conveniently together. My chief letters will, therefore, for the future, be addressed to the President, till further orders.

I send you enclosed some more of Mr. Hartley's letters. He continues passionately to desire peace with America, but wishes we could be separated from France. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence* Vol. I., p. 432.

DCCCCXII

TO M. SCHWEIGHAUSER

Passy, 10 August, 1780.

Sir:—On Tuesday, the 8th instant, sundry bills drawn by you upon me, amounting to upwards of *l.*30,000, were presented at my house, and an [*sic*] immediately urged. Being that day at Versailles, and not returning till late in the evening, I gave my answer the next day, that having no advice of the said bills, and not knowing on what account they could be drawn, I did not accept them.

I think I had formerly objected to the drawing of bills for the amount of an account before the same had been delivered in, and a sufficient time allowed for examining and considering it; which appeared to me a part of a fair dealing. I know, however, that I objected to your drawing at a few *days'* date, which might be expired before the bills could be presented, instead of so many sight, and that you promised to conform to the latter method for the future, and did so accordingly in your subsequent bills. These, however, were drawn at eight days' date, and your letter of advice with the account—if your correspondent had authority to make it, which I think he had not with any right to expect my paying it unaccompanied with vouchers, though the payment was so hastily and prematurely demanded.

On receiving your and my letters, I find the case between us stands thus: June 20th, you wrote to me that Capt. Landais had summoned your correspondents to furnish his wants in *consequence of the orders*

he brought to you from Navy Board, and that you, knowing there had been disputes, had requested M. Thevenard, the commandant, to give your correspondents orders how to act, till my orders should arrive. I answered you, June 24th, that I should have no objections to "your supplying the *Alliance* with such *provisions* as might be necessary for the *present subsistence* of the *people* that are on board her, many of whom are exchanged prisoners, honest and good men, who ought not to suffer *famine* for the folly of Capt. Landais. But the king having given orders for paying all the *necessary charges* of that ship during her present *relache* at L'Orient, I did not see why the application had been made to you unless the provisions furnished ever since her arrival there had been lately stopped, which I had heard, because this was unnecessarily bringing a present expense upon me, besides commencing a new account of disbursements in another house, that will rather tend to confuse the affair, and answer no good purpose." Adding, "I shall therefore write by this post to L'Orient, requesting that if the provisions have been stopped on account of Capt. Landais' misconduct, they may nevertheless be continued for the sake of the poor people." You will observe that this permission to supply was conditional: in case the *provisions* furnished otherwise had been stopped on account of the Capt. Landais' misconduct. That it mentions only *provisions*, and those necessary for the *present subsistence*, not sea stores for the voyage; subsistence, too, for *the people*, not superfluities for the officers; and it was to prevent their

suffering famine, not to regale them with luxuries. By the return of the post from L'Orient, I was informed that the provisions had not been stopped, and it appeared to be merely the will of Capt. Landais to take them, with every thing he had a fancy for, from your correspondents who, it seems, were very willing to furnish him liberally. You now, in yours of the 3d instant, speak of my having approved this *measure*. I do not find among the copies of my letters any other approbation than what is contained in the above. If you have any such, please to send me a copy of it. As to the above, you were at the time so far from considering it an approbation, that you acquaint me in your answer of July 15th that you had given *positive orders* to that house not *to furnish any longer to that frigate*, and that they nevertheless had continued to do it; excusing themselves with this slender reason, that no other house *had presented itself* for that purpose. It was not to be expected that another house would present itself to Messrs. Puchelberg & Co. with such an offer; but it might have been decent for them to have informed themselves, before they undertook a business that was in execution by another house, whether that house had refused or was willing to continue it. You cannot but see upon reflection that, were the disbursements necessary, your observation that it is very immaterial to me, whether they were made by you or Messrs. Gourlade & Moylan is ill-founded; since in one case they would have been paid by the king, who would not probably have demanded payment till the peace, if ever. And in the other case

they are demanded of my [*sic*] with a promptitude and urgency that is unusual if not unfair and cannot but be disagreeable, especially when I consider that the ship was well fitted for the sea and on the point of sailing when Capt. Landais took possession of her, and yet an account of near 32,000 livres is run up against her in a few weeks, great part of it for luxuries and superfluities in extravagant quantities, and—if I may judge of those I do not know by those I do—at very extravagant prices. Upon the whole, since you consider it as a necessary compliance with the orders you received from the Navy Board, I must refer you to them for the consideration and allowance of your account. They have neither given me orders nor furnished me with money to pay such account, and I am persuaded, whatever respect they may with me have for yourself, they will not be much pleased with the conduct of Capt. Landais or your agents. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXIII

TO JOHN PAUL JONES

Passy, 12 August, 1780.

Sir:—I received yours by the Count de Vauban, and I send by him my public despatches, requesting you to sink them if necessary. I am glad you are so near ready for sailing. I return all the papers that were enclosed in yours, and send copies of some

others, which perhaps may be of use to you in your future affair with Landais.

Depend upon it, I never wrote to Mr. Gillon, that the *Bonhomme Richard* was a privateer. I could not write so, because I never had such a thought. I will, next post, send you a copy of my letter to him, by which you will see that he has only forced that construction from a vague expression I used, merely to conceal from him (in answering his idle demand, that I would order your squadron, then on the point of sailing, to go with him to Carolina), that the expedition was at the expense and under the direction of the king, which it was not proper or necessary for him to know. The expression I used was, that *the concerned* had destined the squadron for another service. These words, *the concerned*, he and the counsellor have interpreted to mean the owner of a privateer.

I shall send by the post some private letters for my American friends, for which I had no time by your express. If you should be still at L'Orient when they come, it is well; but do not wait a moment for them, if you are ready to sail, and the wind serves. Adieu! I wish you a prosperous voyage, a happy sight of your friends and country, and that you may be received with all the honors you have so justly merited. I am, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—I say nothing about the prize-money, having never had any thing to do with it; but I will endeavor to forward the payment to those honest fellows who are gone to America. Pray let me know

if the despatches I formerly sent down to go with you in the *Alliance* are gone in her. There were letters containing the proceedings about Captain Landais.

DCCCCXIV

TO MR. AND MRS. WEST

PASSY, 16 August, 1780.

I received by the hands of Mr. Strange, and contemplated with great pleasure, the representations of my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. West and their children, contained in the fine print they have been so kind as to send me. I pray God to bless them all, particularly my godson, and grant them to live as long as I have done, and with as much health, who continue as hearty as a buck, with a hand still steady, as they may see by this writing. I hope yet to embrace them once more in peace. In the meantime I wish them every kind of felicity, being with sincere respect and esteem,

Theirs affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXV

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES

PASSY, 7 September, 1780.

SIR:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me, the 14th instant, on

the appointment of consuls. I have not yet received any orders or instructions from the Congress relating to that object. I shall transmit to that body a copy of your Excellency's letter, but as the office of consul has not been heretofore in use in America, and they may therefore not be so well acquainted with the usual functions and powers of such an officer in Europe as to send me instructions equally complete and perfect with those your Excellency could send to M. de la Luzerne, if the convention were to be treated there, I would submit it to your judgment whether that method may not be the best and shortest. As it is a matter of the same general nature with others that are enumerated among the powers of Congress in the Articles of Confederation, though not particularly mentioned; and as the grant in the 29th article of the treaty is to the *States United*, and not to each separately; and further, as the having a consul for each State, or thirteen American consuls, in each port of France would be more expense and inconvenience than of real utility, I cannot imagine that the authority of Congress to make the necessary convention will be disputed by the particular States. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant. B. Franklin.

DCCCCXVI

DIPLOMATIC MEMORANDUM ENCLOSING A SKETCH OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION [1]

N'ayant aucun moyen de satisfaire aux payemens de sommes aussi considérables, & ne pouvant supporter l'idée de perdre le reste de confiance que nous avons acquis en Europe par un retour à protest, qui apprèteroit à rire aux Anglois à nos dépens en leur fournissant les moyens d'ajouter des realités aux fictions qu'ils ne cessent de repandre.

Le poids de la guerre ne permettant pas au gouvernement de diviser ses moyens, pour la pousser avec vigueur je lui ai proposé un expedient qui peut nous secourir sans lui être à charge, c'est à dire que je m'engagerois envers lui que le Congres fourniroit par lui-même, ou par les agents françois, à ses fraix les vivres nécessaires aux troupes de France en Amerique jusqu'à la concurrence de nos besoins suivant l'état ci joint, & pour le payement desquels il fournira ici les sommes nécessaires aux epoques fixées.

Tout ce que le Congrès fourneroit au dela seroit remboursé ici & employé à lui faire passer les articles d'Europe qui lui seroit nécessaires; on éviteroit par là tous les fraix, les inconvéniens, les longueurs, & les risques qui resultent nécessairement d'une assui grande distance.

B. Franklin.

Á Passy ce 26 Sept., 1780.

[1] The "having" in French of the person who prepared this statement must have been like Beatrice's "having in beard, but a younger brother's revenue." We give it, however, as we find it.

ÉTAT DES FONDS NECESSAIRES POUR LES EPOQUES CY APRÈS, SÇAVOIR

Dès à present (26 Sepbre., 1780) et jusqu' à la fin de cette année, les traites du bureau d'emprunt	*l.*500,000	
Celles de Nantes pour solde des achats qui y ont été fait	300,000	
Le fret et armement du vaisseau *le Marqs. de la Fayette* . . .	200,000	
Les traittes du Congrès pour mille livs. sterg	24,000	
		*l.*1,024,000
Dans le quartier de Janvr., Fev. et Mars, il y aura à payer, les traittes du bureau d'emprunt	800,000	
Les 50 mille dollars de traittes du Congrès (a 5th)	25,000	
Le reste de celles de M. Lawrens . .	24,000	
Et les depenses courantes	26,000	
		*l.*1,000,000
Dans les 3 mois d'Avril, May & Juin, du bureau d'emprunt	800,000	
Acceptations de Beaumarchais . .	144,000	
A compte des draps achetés pr. le Congrès	100,000	
Les depences courantes	36,000	
		*l.*1,080,000
Dans les 3 mois de Juillet, Aoust et Septembre, les traittes du bureau d'emprunt	800,000	
A compte de draps achetés par le Congrès	100,000	
Les depenses courantes	34,000	
		*l.*934,000
Dans les 3 mois d'Octobre, Novembre et Decembre, les traittes du bureau d'emprunt	900,000	
Pour solde des achats de drap . .	200,000	
Les depenses courantes	38,000	
		*l.*1,138,000
		*l.*5,176,000

DCCCCXVII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

PASSY, 2 October, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received duly your several letters of the 12th, 15th, 17th, 19th, and 21st of September. I am much pleased with the intelligence you sent me, and with the papers you have had printed.

Mr. Searle is a military officer of the Pennsylvania troops, and a member of Congress. He has some commission to execute for that province, but none that I know of from Congress. He has an open letter for you from Mr. Lovell, which he has shown me. It is full of expressions of his esteem; and I understand from Mr. Searle that you stand exceedingly well with the Committee and with the Congress in general. I am sorry to see any marks of uneasiness and apprehension in your letters. M. Chaumont tells me that you want some assurance of being continued. The Congress itself is changeable at the pleasure of their electors, and none of their servants have, or can have, any such assurance. If, therefore, any thing better for you, and more substantial, should offer, nobody can blame you for accepting it, however satisfied they may be with your services. But, as to the continuance of what you may enjoy, or of something as valuable in the service of the Congress, I think you may make yourself easy; for your appointment seems more likely to be increased than diminished, though it does not belong to me to promise any thing.

Mr. Laurens was to sail three days after Mr. Searle,

who begins to fear he must be lost, as it was a vessel he intended to embark in. He was bound directly to Holland.[1]

I enclose some extracts of letters from two French officers of distinction in the army of M. de Rochambeau, which are pleasing, as they mark the good intelligence that subsists between the troops, contrary to the reports circulated by the English. They will do perhaps for your *Leyden Gazette*. With great esteem and affection, I am ever, etc.,

B. Franklin.

[1] This was Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, who had been a prominent member of the Continental Congress, of which he succeeded Hancock as President. In August, 1780, he was appointed a Commissioner to negotiate a loan in Holland. A few days after he sailed, he was captured by an English cruiser, was sent to England and confined in the Tower. Though nearly three months had elapsed since he sailed, Franklin had not yet been apprised of his fate. After a tedious and painful imprisonment of fifteen months he was finally released in exchange for Lord Cornwallis. The papers with which he was charged by Congress he threw overboard when captured, but they were secured by the enemy before they had time to sink. They were forwarded to London, and their contents were the proximate cause of the war that soon ensued between Holland and England. Upon his release Mr. Laurens repaired to Holland, but as Mr. Adams had been commissioned as Minister Plenipotentiary to that court, he applied for leave to return. In reply to this request, he was directed by Congress to join Messrs. Franklin, Adams, and Jay at Paris to assist in negotiating a general peace. He returned to the United States in 1784 and died on the 8th of December, 1792, at the age of 69. His official correspondence, which will be found in the 2d volume of the *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, reproaches Franklin with a neglect to do all that he might and should have done to shorten his imprisonment. These reproaches, as will appear later, were entirely undeserved. Nothing that Franklin or any one else could do would have induced the British government to give Laurens his freedom at any time before the capture of Cornwallis.

DCCCCXVIII

TO JOHN JAY

PASSY, 2 October, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received duly and in good order the several letters you have written to me of August 16th, 19th, September 8th and 22d. The papers that accompanied them of your writing gave me the pleasure of seeing the affairs of our country in such good hands, and the prospect, from your youth, of its having the service of so able a minister for a great number of years. But the little success that has attended your late applications for money mortified me exceedingly; and the storm of bills, which I found coming upon us both, has terrified and vexed me to such a degree, that I have been deprived of sleep, and so much indisposed by continual anxiety, as to be rendered almost incapable of writing.

At length I got over a reluctance that was almost invincible, and made another application to the government here for more money. I drew up and presented a state of debts and newly expected demands, and requested its aid to extricate me. Judging from your letters that you were not likely to obtain any thing considerable from your court, I put down in my estimate the twenty-five thousand dollars drawn upon you, with the same sum drawn upon me, as what would probably come to me for payment. I have now the pleasure to acquaint you that my memorial was received in the kindest and most friendly manner; and, though the court here is not without its embarrassments on account of money,

I was told to make myself easy, for that I should be assisted with what was necessary.

Mr. Searle arriving about this time, and assuring me there had been a plentiful harvest and great crops of all kinds; that the Congress had demanded of the several States contributions in produce, which would be cheerfully given; that they would therefore have plenty of provisions to dispose of; and, I being much pleased with the generous behavior just experienced, I presented another paper, proposing, in order to ease the government here, which had been so willing to ease us, that the Congress might furnish their army in America with provisions in part payment for the services lent us. This proposition, I was told, was well taken, but it being considered that the States having the enemy in their country, and obliged to make great expenses for the present campaign, the furnishing so much provisions as the French army might need might straiten and be inconvenient to the Congress, his Majesty did not at this time think it right to accept the offer. You will not wonder at my loving this good prince; he will win the hearts of all America.

If you are not so fortunate in Spain, continue, however, the even good temper you have hitherto manifested. Spain owes us nothing; therefore, whatever friendship she shows us in lending money, or furnishing clothes, etc., though not equal to our wants and wishes, is however *tant de gagne*. Those who have begun to assist us are more likely to continue than to decline, and we are still so much obliged as their aids amount to. But I hope, and am con-

fident, that court will be wiser than to take advantage of our distress, and insist on our making sacrifices by an agreement, which the circumstances of such distress would hereafter weaken, and the very proposition can only give disgust at present. Poor as we are, yet, as I know we shall be rich, I would rather agree with them to buy at a great price the whole of their right on the Mississippi, than sell a drop of its waters. A neighbor might as well ask me to sell my street door.

I wish you could obtain an account of what they have supplied us with already in money and goods.

M. Grand informing me that one of the bills drawn on you having been sent from hence to Madrid was come back unaccepted, I have directed him to pay it; and he has, at my request undertaken to write to the Marquis D'Yranda, to assist you with money to answer such bills as you are not otherwise enabled to pay, and to draw on him for the amount; which drafts I shall answer here as far as twenty-five thousand dollars. If you expect more, acquaint me. But pray write to Congress, as I do, to forbear this practice, which is so extremely hazardous, and may, some time or other, prove very mischievous to their credit and affairs. I have undertaken, too, for the bills drawn on Mr. Laurens, that have yet appeared. He was to have sailed three days after Mr. Searle, that is, the 18th of July. Mr. Searle begins to be in pain for him, having no good opinion of the little vessel he was to embark in.

We have letters from America to the 7th of August. The spirit of our people was never higher. Vast

exertions making are preparatory for some important action; great harmony and affection between the troops of the two nations; the new money in good credit, etc.

I will write to you again shortly, and to Mr. Carmichael. I shall now be able to pay up your salaries complete for the year; but, as demands unforeseen are continually coming upon me, I still retain the expectations you have given me, of being reimbursed out of the first remittances you receive.

If you find any inclination to hug me for the good news of this letter, I constitute and appoint Mrs. Jay my attorney to receive in my behalf your embraces. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXIX

TO J. ADAMS

PASSY, 2 October, 1780.

SIR:—By all our late advices from America, the hopes you express that our countrymen, instead of amusing themselves any longer with delusive dreams of peace, would bend the whole force of their minds to find out their own strength and resources, and to depend upon themselves, are actually accomplished.[1]

[1] In a letter dated August 17, 1780, Adams had written Franklin: "It is very plain, however, that speculation and disputation can do us little service. No facts are believed, but decisive military conquests; no arguments are seriously attended to in Europe, but force. It is to be hoped our countrymen, instead of amusing themselves any longer with

All the accounts I have seen agree that the spirit of our people was never higher than at present, nor their exertions more vigorous.

Enclosed I send you extracts of some letters from two French officers, a colonel and lieutenant-colonel in the army of M. de Rochambeau, which are the more pleasing, as they not only give a good character of our troops, but show the good understanding that subsists between them and those of our ally. I hope we shall soon hear of something decisive performed by their joint operations, for your observation is just, that speculations and disputations do us little service. Our credit and weight in Europe depend more on what we do than on what we say; and I have long been humiliated with the idea of our running about from court to court begging for money and friendship, which are the more withheld, the more eagerly they are solicited, and would perhaps have been offered if they had not been asked. The supposed necessity is our only excuse. The proverb says, *God helps them that help themselves.* And the world too in this sense is very godly.

As the English papers have pretended to intelligence that our troops and the French disagree, perhaps it would not be amiss to get these extracts inserted in the *Amsterdam Gazette.*

With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.

My compliments to Messrs. Dana and Austin.

delusive dreams of peace, will bend the whole force of their minds to augment their navy, to find out their own strength and resources, and to depend upon themselves."

DCCCCXX

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 8 October, 1780.

Sir:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Mr. Andrews, and shall render him every service I can in his application.

Your books and trunks have been lodged here by Mr. Thaxter, and will be taken care of. They are of no inconvenience to me.

We begin to be in pain for Mr. Laurens, who was to have sailed three days after Mr. Searle. If that took place, he has been out ten or eleven weeks. I hope he did not sail so soon, otherwise it would be probable that he is either lost or taken.[1]

I do not just now recollect my having written as from myself any letter to the Grand Pensionary. I drew, indeed, the letter that was sent by the Commissioners acquainting him with the treaty of commerce, to which we had no answer. But I will search, and if I find such a one will send you a copy of the other.

I shall be glad to hear if you are like to make any progress in the affair of a loan, which I understand Mr. Laurens was charged with. I send you enclosed a copy of a vote of Congress, respecting your salaries. I hope you will be able to do without my assistance. If not, I must furnish you. But I have been obliged to accept M. Neufville's bills on account of his acceptances of those drawn on Mr. Laurens, and I shall with some difficulty be able to pay them,

[1] See note on p. 298.

though these extra demands often embarrass me exceedingly.

We hear that the *Alliance* is arrived at Boston.

I beg leave to recommend to your civilities Mr. Searle, a Member of Congress for Pennsylvania, with whose conversation you will be pleased, as he can give you good information of the state of our affairs when he left America.

I ought to acquaint you, *a governo* as the merchants say, that M. le Comte de Vergennes, having taken much amiss some passages in your letter to him, sent the whole correspondence to me, requesting that I would transmit it to Congress. I was myself sorry to see those passages. If they were the effects merely of inadvertence, and you do not on reflection approve of them, perhaps you may think it proper to write something for effacing the impressions made by them. I do not presume to advise you; but mention it only for your consideration. The vessel is not yet gone, which carries the papers. With great regard, I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXI

TO MISS GEORGIANA SHIPLEY

Passy, 8 October, 1780.

It is long, very long, my dear friend, since I had the great pleasure of hearing from you, and receiving any of your very pleasing letters. But it is my fault. I have long omitted my part of the correspondence. Those who love to receive letters should write letters.

I wish I could safely promise an amendment of that fault. But, besides the indolence attending age, and growing upon us with it, my time is engrossed by too much business; and I have too many inducements to postpone doing what I feel I ought to do for my own sake, and what I can never resolve to omit entirely.

Your translations from Horace, as far as I can judge of poetry and translations, are very good. That of the *Quó, quó, scelesti ruitis?* is so suitable to the times, that the conclusion (in your version) seems, to threaten like a prophecy; and methinks there is at least some appearance of danger that it may be fulfilled. I am unhappily an enemy, yet I think there has been enough of blood spilt, and I wish what is left in the veins of that once loved people may be spared by a peace solid and everlasting.

It is a great while since I have heard any thing of the *good bishop*. Strange, that so simple a character should sufficiently distinguish one of that sacred body! *Donnez-moi de ses nouvelles*. I have been some time flattered with the expectation of seeing the countenance of that most honored and ever beloved friend, delineated by your pencil. The portrait is said to have been long on the way, but it is not yet arrived; nor can I hear where it is.

Indolent as I have confessed myself to be, I could not, you see, miss this good and safe opportunity of sending you a few lines, with my best wishes for your happiness, and that of the whole dear and amiable family in whose sweet society I have spent so many happy hours. Mr. Jones[1] tells me he shall have a

[1] Afterwards Sir William Jones, who married her sister.—Editor.

pleasure in being the bearer of my letter, of which I make no doubt. I learn from him that to your drawing, and music, and painting, and poetry, and Latin, you have added a proficiency in chess; so that you are, as the French say, *remplie de talents*. May they and you fall to the lot of one that shall duly value them, and love you as much as I do. Adieu.

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 9 October, 1780.

Dear Sir:—I received yours of the 29th of September and 3d of October. It is a very good addition you have made to your *Memoir* for the ministers of Russia and Sweden. I am glad to find you are again on such good terms with the ambassador as to be invited to his comedy. I doubt not of your continuing to cultivate that good understanding. I like much your insertions in the gazettes. Such things have good effects.

Your information relative to the transactions at Petersburgh and in Denmark are very interesting, and afforded me a good deal of satisfaction, particularly the former. Mr. Searle will have the pleasure of seeing you. I recommend him warmly to your civilities. He is much your friend, and will advise Mr. Laurens to make you his secretary, which I hope you will accept. I have given it as my opinion that Mr. Laurens can nowhere find one better qualified, or

more deserving. The choice is left to that minister, and he is empowered to give a salary of five hundred pounds sterling a year. I am in pain on account of his not being yet arrived, but I hope you will see him soon. I request you would find means to introduce Mr. Searle to the Portuguese ambassador. Pray consider the enclosed papers, and, after advising with your friend, give me your opinion as to the manner of the application to the States-General, whether I should make it through their ambassador, or directly with a letter to the Grand Pensionary, or in what other manner. You know we wrote to him formerly, and received no answer. With great esteem, I am, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—You say nothing of Mr. Adams. How do you stand with him? What is he doing?

DCCCCXXIII

TO THOMAS RUSTON

PASSY, 9 October, 1780.

SIR:—I received and read with pleasure your thoughts on American finance, and your scheme of a bank. I communicated them to the Abbé Morellet, who is a good judge of the subject, and he has translated them into French. He thinks them generally very just, and very clearly expressed. I shall forward them to a friend in the Congress.

That body is, as you suppose, not well skilled in financing. But their deficiency in knowledge has been amply supplied by good luck. They issued an

immense quantity of paper bills to pay, clothe, arm, and feed their troops, and fit out ships; and with this paper, without taxes for the first three years, they fought and baffled one of the most powerful nations of Europe. They hoped, notwithstanding its quantity, to have kept up the value of their paper. In this they were mistaken. It depreciated gradually. But this depreciation, though in some circumstances inconvenient, has had the general good and great effect of operating as a tax, and perhaps the most equal of all taxes, since it depreciated in the hands of the holders of money, and thereby taxed them in proportion to the sums they held and the time they held it, which generally is in proportion to men's wealth. Thus, after having done its business, the paper is reduced to the sixtieth part of its original value.

Having issued two hundred millions of dollars the Congress stopped, and supplied themselves by borrowing. These sums were borrowed at different periods during the progress of the depreciation. Those who lent to the public thereby fixed the value of the paper they lent, since it is to be repaid in silver according to its value at the time of the loan. The rest went on depreciating; and the depreciation is at length only stopped by the vast nominal sums called in easily by taxes, and which will be by that means destroyed. Thus, so much of the public debt has been in this manner insensibly paid, that the remainder, which you desire to know, does not exceed six millions sterling. And now they are working with new paper, expressed to be equal in value to silver, which they have made to bear interest;

and I have provided such funds to pay that interest, that probably its original value will be supported.

In the meantime the vigor of their military operations is again revived, and they are now as able, with respect to money, to carry on the war, as they were at the beginning, and much more so with regard to troops, arms, and discipline. It is also an increasing nation, sixty thousand children having been born annually in the United States since the beginning of the war; while their enemies are said to be diminishing.

I am, sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXXIV

TO RICHARD PRICE

PASSY, 9 October, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—Besides the pleasure of their company, I had the great satisfaction of hearing by your two valuable friends, and learning from your letter, that you enjoy a good state of health. May God continue it, as well for the good of mankind as for your comfort. I thank you much for the second edition of your excellent pamphlet. I forwarded that you sent to Mr. Dana, he being in Holland. I wish also to see the piece you have written (as Mr. Jones tells me) on Toleration. I do not expect that your new Parliament will be either wiser or honester than the last. All projects to procure an honest one, by place bills, etc., appear to me vain and impracticable. The true cure, I imagine, is to be found only in rendering all places unprofitable, and the king too poor to give bribes and pensions. Till this is done, which can

only be by a revolution (and I think you have not virtue enough left to procure one), your nation will always be plundered and obliged to pay by taxes the plunderers for plundering and ruining. Liberty and virtue, therefore, join in the call, COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE!

I am fully of your opinion respecting religious tests: but, though the people of Massachusetts have not in their new Constitution kept quite clear of them, yet, if we consider what that people were one hundred years ago, we must allow they have gone great lengths in liberality of sentiment on religious subjects; and we may hope for greater degrees of perfection when their Constitution, some years hence, shall be revised. If Christian preachers had continued to teach as Christ and his Apostles did, without salaries, and as the Quakers now do, I imagine tests would never have existed; for I think they were invented not so much to secure religion itself as the emoluments of it. When a religion is good, I conceive that it will support itself; and when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one. But I shall be out of my depth if I wade any deeper in theology, and I will not trouble you with politics, nor with news which are almost as uncertain; but conclude with a heartfelt wish to embrace you once more, and enjoy your sweet society in peace, among our honest, worthy, ingenious friends at the *London*. Adieu.

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXXV

DIALOGUE BETWEEN FRANKLIN AND THE GOUT

Midnight, 22 October, 1780.

FRANKLIN. Eh! oh! eh! What have I done to merit these cruel sufferings?

GOUT. Many things; you have ate and drank too freely, and too much indulged those legs of yours in their indolence.

FRANKLIN. Who is it that accuses me?

GOUT. It is I, even I, the Gout.

FRANKLIN. What! my enemy in person?

GOUT. No, not your enemy.

FRANKLIN. I repeat it, my enemy; for you would not only torment my body to death, but ruin my good name; you reproach me as a glutton and a tippler; now all the world, that knows me, will allow that I am neither the one nor the other.

GOUT. The world may think as it pleases; it is always very complaisant to itself, and sometimes to its friends; but I very well know that the quantity of meat and drink proper for a man, who takes a reasonable degree of exercise, would be too much for another, who never takes any.

FRANKLIN. I take—eh! oh!—as much exercise —eh!—as I can, Madam Gout. You know my sedentary state, and on that account, it would seem, Madam Gout, as if you might spare me a little, seeing it is not altogether my own fault.

GOUT. Not a jot; your rhetoric and your politeness are thrown away; your apology avails nothing. If your situation in life is a sedentary one, your

amusements, your recreation, at least, should be active. You ought to walk or ride; or, if the weather prevents that, play at billiards. But let us examine your course of life. While the mornings are long, and you have leisure to go abroad, what do you do? Why, instead of gaining an appetite for breakfast, by salutary exercise, you amuse yourself with books, pamphlets, or newspapers, which commonly are not worth the reading. Yet you eat an inordinate breakfast, four dishes of tea, with cream, and one or two buttered toasts, with slices of hung beef, which I fancy are not things the most easily digested. Immediately afterwards you sit down to write at your desk, or converse with persons who apply to you on business. Thus the time passes till one, without any kind of bodily exercise. But all this I could pardon, in regard, as you say, to your sedentary condition. But what is your practice after dinner? Walking in the beautiful gardens of those friends with whom you have dined would be the choice of men of sense; yours is to be fixed down to chess, where you are found engaged for two or three hours! This is your perpetual recreation, which is the least eligible of any for a sedentary man, because, instead of accelerating the motion of the fluids, the rigid attention it requires helps to retard the circulation and obstruct internal secretions. Wrapt in the speculations of this wretched game, you destroy your constitution. What can be expected from such a course of living, but a body replete with stagnant humors, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of dangerous maladies, if I, the Gout, did not occasionally bring you

relief by agitating those humors, and so purifying or dissipating them? If it was in some nook or alley in Paris, deprived of walks, that you played awhile at chess after dinner, this might be excusable; but the same taste prevails with you in Passy, Auteuil, Montmartre, or Sanoy, places where there are the finest gardens and walks, a pure air, beautiful women, and most agreeable and instructive conversation; all which you might enjoy by frequenting the walks. But these are rejected for this abominable game of chess. Fie, then, Mr. Franklin! But amidst my instructions, I had almost forgot to administer my wholesome corrections; so take that twinge,—and that.

FRANKLIN. Oh! eh! oh! ohhh! As much instruction as you please, Madam Gout, and as many reproaches; but pray, Madam, a truce with your corrections!

GOUT. No, Sir, no,—I will not abate a particle of what is so much for your good,—therefore——

FRANKLIN. Oh! ehhh!—It is not fair to say I take no exercise, when I do very often, going out to dine and returning in my carriage.

GOUT. That, of all imaginable exercises, is the most slight and insignificant, if you allude to the motion of a carriage suspended on springs. By observing the degree of heat obtained by different kinds of motion, we may form an estimate of the quantity of exercise given by each. Thus, for example, if you turn out to walk in winter with cold feet, in an hour's time you will be in a glow all over; ride on horseback, the same effect will scarcely be perceived by four

hours' round trotting; but if you loll in a carriage, such as you have mentioned, you may travel all day and gladly enter the last inn to warm your feet by a fire. Flatter yourself then no longer, that half an hour's airing in your carriage deserves the name of exercise. Providence has appointed few to roll in carriages, while he has given to all a pair of legs, which are machines infinitely more commodious and serviceable. Be grateful, then, and make a proper use of yours. Would you know how they forward the circulation of your fluids, in the very action of transporting you from place to place; observe when you walk, that all your weight is alternately thrown from one leg to the other; this occasions a great pressure on the vessels of the foot, and repels their contents; when relieved, by the weight being thrown on the other foot, the vessels of the first are allowed to replenish, and, by a return of this weight, this repulsion again succeeds; thus accelerating the circulation of the blood. The heat produced in any given time depends on the degree of this acceleration; the fluids are shaken, the humors attenuated, the secretions facilitated, and all goes well; the cheeks are ruddy, and health is established. Behold your fair friend at Auteuil [1]; a lady who received from bounteous nature more really useful science than half a dozen such pretenders to philosophy as you have been able to extract from all your books. When she honors you with a visit, it is on foot. She walks all hours of the day, and leaves indolence, and its concomitant maladies, to be endured by her horses. In

[1] Madame Helvetius.—Ed.

this, see at once the preservative of her health and personal charms. But when you go to Auteuil, you must have your carriage, though it is no farther from Passy to Auteuil than from Auteuil to Passy.

FRANKLIN. Your reasonings grow very tiresome.

GOUT. I stand corrected. I will be silent and continue my office; take that, and that.

FRANKLIN. Oh! Ohh! Talk on, I pray you.

GOUT. No, no; I have a good number of twinges for you to-night, and you may be sure of some more to-morrow.

FRANKLIN. What, with such a fever! I shall go distracted. Oh! eh! Can no one bear it for me?

GOUT. Ask that of your horses; they have served you faithfully.

FRANKLIN. How can you so cruelly sport with my torments?

GOUT. Sport! I am very serious. I have here a list of offences against your own health distinctly written, and can justify every stroke inflicted on you.

FRANKLIN. Read it then.

GOUT. It is too long a detail; but I will briefly mention some particulars.

FRANKLIN. Proceed. I am all attention.

GOUT. Do you remember how often you have promised yourself, the following morning, a walk in the grove of Boulogne, in the garden de la Muette, or in your own garden, and have violated your promise, alleging, at one time, it was too cold, at another too warm, too windy, too moist, or what else you

pleased; when in truth it was too nothing, but your insuperable love of ease?

FRANKLIN. That I confess may have happened occasionally, probably ten times in a year.

GOUT. Your confession is very far short of the truth; the gross amount is one hundred and ninety-nine times.

FRANKLIN. Is it possible?

GOUT. So possible, that it is fact; you may rely on the accuracy of my statement. You know M. Brillon's gardens, and what fine walks they contain; you know the handsome flight of an hundred steps, which lead from the terrace above to the lawn below. You have been in the practice of visiting this amiable family twice a week, after dinner, and it is a maxim of your own, that "a man may take as much exercise in walking a mile, up and down stairs, as in ten on level ground." What an opportunity was here for you to have had exercise in both these ways! Did you embrace it, and how often?

FRANKLIN. I cannot immediately answer that question.

GOUT. I will do it for you; not once.

FRANKLIN. Not once?

GOUT. Even so. During the summer you went there at six o'clock. You found the charming lady, with her lovely children and friends, eager to walk with you, and entertain you with their agreeable conversation; and what has been your choice? Why, to sit on the terrace, satisfying yourself with the fine prospect, and passing your eye over the beauties of the garden below, without taking one step to descend

and walk about in them. On the contrary, you call for tea and the chess-board; and lo! you are occupied in your seat till nine o'clock, and that besides two hours' play after dinner; and then, instead of walking home, which would have bestirred you a little, you step into your carriage. How absurd to suppose that all this carelessness can be reconcilable with health, without my interposition!

FRANKLIN. I am convinced now of the justness of Poor Richard's remark, that "Our debts and our sins are always greater than we think for."

GOUT. So it is. You philosophers are sages in your maxims, and fools in your conduct.

FRANKLIN. But do you charge among my crimes, that I return in a carriage from M. Brillon's?

GOUT. Certainly; for, having been seated all the while, you cannot object the fatigue of the day, and cannot want therefore the relief of a carriage.

FRANKLIN. What then would you have me do with my carriage?

GOUT. Burn it if you choose; you would at least get heat out of it once in this way; or, if you dislike that proposal, here 's another for you; observe the poor peasants, who work in the vineyards and grounds about the villages of Passy, Auteuil, Chaillot, etc.; you may find every day among these deserving creatures, four or five old men and women, bent and perhaps crippled by weight of years, and too long and too great labor. After a most fatiguing day, these people have to trudge a mile or two to their smoky huts. Order your coachman to set them down. This is an act that will be good for

your soul; and, at the same time, after your visit to the Brillons, if you return on foot, that will be good for your body.

FRANKLIN. Ah! how tiresome you are!

GOUT. Well, then, to my office; it should not be forgotten that I am your physician. There.

FRANKLIN. Ohhh! what a devil of a physician!

GOUT. How ungrateful you are to say so! Is it not I who, in the character of your physician, have saved you from the palsy, dropsy, and apoplexy? one or other of which would have done for you long ago, but for me.

FRANKLIN. I submit, and thank you for the past, but entreat the discontinuance of your visits for the future; for, in my mind, one had better die than be cured so dolefully. Permit me just to hint, that I have also not been unfriendly to *you*. I never feed physician or quack of any kind, to enter the list against you; if then you do not leave me to my repose, it may be said you are ungrateful too.

GOUT. I can scarcely acknowledge that as any objection. As to quacks, I despise them; they may kill you indeed, but cannot injure me. And, as to regular physicians, they are at last convinced that the gout, in such a subject as you are, is no disease, but a remedy; and wherefore cure a remedy?—but to our business,—there.

FRANKLIN. Oh! oh!—for Heaven's sake leave me! and I promise faithfully never more to play at chess, but to take exercise daily, and live temperately.

GOUT. I know you too well. You promise fair;

but, after a few months of good health, you will return to your old habits; your fine promises will be forgotten like the forms of the last year's clouds. Let us then finish the account, and I will go. But I leave you with an assurance of visiting you again at a proper time and place; for my object is your good, and you are sensible now that I am your *real friend.*

DCCCCXXVI

FROM JOHN ADAMS

AMSTERDAM, 4 November, 1780.

SIR:—M. de Neufville this morning brought to me a number of bills of exchange, drawn upon Mr. Laurens, in the month of July, amounting to seven or eight hundred pounds sterling, and informed me that your Excellency had declined becoming responsible for them, and referred him to me. I have inquired of Mr. Searle, who informs me there are about twenty thousand pounds in such bills now on their way.

If there were only seven or eight hundred pounds, I would accept them for the honor of the United States, and run the venture of being able to pay them, by borrowing, or some way or other; but twenty thousand pounds is much beyond my private credit.

I have been, and am, pursuing all those measures to which I am advised by gentlemen in whose judgment I can justify placing confidence, and am not

without hopes of succeeding in some measure; but I have not as yet been able to obtain any money, nor any certainty of obtaining any in future. I write this, therefore, to your Excellency, that, if you could see your way clear to become responsible for these bills for the present, I will engage to see them paid with the money I may borrow here, if I borrow enough before the term for their payment expires, or as much of them as I shall be able to borrow; but in this case, if I should not succeed in obtaining the money, your Excellency will be answerable. I should be sorry that the credit of the United States should suffer any stain, and would prevent it if I could; but at present it is not in my power.

The successes of the English at the southward, added to the many causes that obstructed our credit in this republic before, some of which it would not be prudent to explain, will render a loan here difficult; but I still hope not quite impracticable. I have the honor to be, etc.,

JOHN ADAMS.

DCCCCXXVII

TO SIR GREY COOPER, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY OF GREAT BRITAIN

PASSY, 7 November, 1780.

SIR:—I understand that Mr. Laurens, an American gentleman, for whom I have a great esteem, is a prisoner in the Tower, and that his health suffers by the closeness and rigor of his confinement. As I do

not think that your affairs receive any advantage from the harshness of this proceeding, I take the freedom of requesting your kind interposition, to obtain for him such a degree of air and liberty, on his parole or otherwise, as may be necessary for his health and comfort. The fortune of war, which is daily changing, may possibly put it in my power to do the like good office for some friend of yours, which I shall perform with much pleasure, not only for the sake of humanity, but in respect to the ashes of our former friendship. With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc., B. FRANKLIN.[1]

[1] In reply to this, Franklin received from Sir Grey Cooper a letter on the 29th of same month, enclosing the following note from Mr. Charles Vernon, Lieut.-Gov. of the Tower.

"HAMPSTEAD, 27 Nov., 1780.

"DEAR SIR:—I am much ashamed to think that I shall appear so dilatory in answering the favor of your letter; but the truth is I was not in town when the messenger left it in Cork Street, and by the neglect of my servants I received it only on Sunday last. I went immediately to the Tower, to know from Mr. Laurens himself if he had any cause of complaint, and if he had availed himself of the indulgence allowed him by the Secretary of State, of walking within the Tower whenever it was agreeable to himself. His answer to me was full and frank to the questions, that he had received every reasonable indulgence since his confinement, and that by the liberty allowed him of walking he found his health much mended. He said, at the same time, that he had always thought himself highly honored by the distinguished place of his confinement, and regretted much it was not in his power to make known to all the world the acknowledgments he had more than once made to me upon this subject.

"I beg you will do me the favor to communicate these particulars to Lord George Germain as soon as convenient. I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc., CHARLES VERNON."

The tenor of this note is not in harmony with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Laurens, about a year afterwards, in his petition presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Burke. In this petition, dated December 7, 1781, he states: "That he was captured on the American coast, and committed to the Tower on the 6th of October,

DCCCCXXVIII

TO EDWARD NAIRNE, OF LONDON

READ AT A MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, JANUARY 26, 1786.

PASSY, NEAR PARIS, 13 November, 1780.

SIR:—The qualities hitherto sought in a hygrometer, or instrument to discover the degrees of moisture and dryness in the air, seem to have been, an aptitude to receive humidity readily from a moist air, and to part with it as readily to a dry air. Different substances have been found to possess more or less of this quality; but when we shall have found the substance that has it in the greatest perfection, there will still remain some uncertainty in the conclusions to be drawn from the degree shown by the instrument, arising from the actual state of the instrument itself as to heat and cold. Thus, if two bottles or vessels of glass or metal being filled, the one with cold and the other with hot water, are brought into a room, the moisture of the air in the room will attach itself in quantities to the surface of the cold vessel; while, if you actually wet the surface of the hot vessel, the moisture will immediately quit it, and be absorbed by the same air. And thus, in a sudden change in the

1780, being then dangerously ill; that in the meantime he has in many respects, particularly by being deprived (with very little exception) of the visits and consolations of his children and other relations and friends, suffered under a degree of rigor, almost, if not altogether, unexampled in modern British history; that, from long confinement and the want of proper exercise, and other obvious causes, his bodily health is greatly impaired, and that he is now in a languishing state," etc. See *Annual Register* for 1781, p. 322.

air from cold to warm, the instrument remaining longer cold may condense and absorb more moisture, and mark the air as having become more humid than it is in reality, and the contrary in a change from warm to cold.

But, if such a sudden changing instrument could be freed from these imperfections, yet, when the design is to discover the different degrees of humidity in the air of different countries, I apprehend the quick sensibility of the instrument to be rather a disadvantage; since, to draw the desired conclusions from it, a constant and frequent observation day and night in each country will be necessary for a year or years, and the mean of each different set of observations is to be found and determined. After all which, some uncertainty will remain respecting the different degrees of exactitude with which different persons may have made and taken notes of their observations.

For these reasons I apprehend that a substance which, though capable of being distended by moisture and contracted by dryness, is so slow in receiving and parting with its humidity, that the frequent changes in the atmosphere have not time to affect it sensibly, and which therefore should gradually take nearly the medium of all those changes and preserve it constantly, would be the most proper substance of which to make such an hygrometer.

Such an instrument, you, my dear sir, though without intending it, have made for me; and I, without desiring or expecting it, have received from you. It is therefore with propriety that I address to you the

following account of it; and the more as you have both a head to contrive and a hand to execute the means of perfecting it. And I do this with greater pleasure, as it affords me the opportunity of renewing that ancient correspondence and acquaintance with you, which to me was always so pleasing and so instructive.

You may possibly remember that, in or about the year 1758, you made for me a set of artificial magnets, six in number, each five inches and a half long, half an inch broad, and one eighth of an inch thick. These, with two pieces of soft iron, which together equalled one of the magnets, were enclosed in a little box of mahogany wood, the grain of which ran with, and not across, the length of the box; and the box was closed by a little shutter of the same wood, the grain of which ran across the box; and the ends of this shutting piece were bevelled so as to fit and slide in a kind of dovetail groove when the box was to be shut or opened.

I had been of opinion that good mahogany wood was not affected by moisture so as to change its dimensions, and that it was always to be found as the tools of the workmen left it. Indeed the difference at different times in the same country is so small as to be scarcely in a common way observable. Hence the box, which was made so as to allow sufficient room for the magnets to slide out and in freely, and, when in, afforded them so much play that by shaking the box one could make them strike the opposite sides alternately, continued in the same state all the time I remained in England, which was four years,

without any apparent alteration. I left England in August, 1762, and arrived at Philadelphia in October the same year. In a few weeks after my arrival, being desirous of showing your magnets to a philosophical friend, I found them so tight in the box that it was with difficulty I got them out; and constantly, during the two years I remained there, viz., till November, 1764, this difficulty of getting them out and in continued. The little shutter too, as wood does not shrink lengthways of the grain, was found too long to enter its grooves, and, not being used, was mislaid and lost; and I afterwards had another made that fitted.

In December, 1764, I returned to England, and after some time I observed that my box was become full big enough for my magnets, and too wide for my new shutter, which was so much too short for its grooves that it was apt to fall out, and to make it keep in I lengthened it by adding to each end a little coat of sealing-wax.

I continued in England more than ten years, and during all that time, after the first change, I perceived no alteration. The magnets had the same freedom in their box, and the little shutter continued with the added sealing-wax to fit its grooves, till some weeks after my second return to America.

As I could not imagine any other cause for this change of dimensions in the box, when in the different countries, I concluded, first generally, that the air of England was moister than that of America. And this I supposed an effect of its being an island, where every wind that blew must necessarily pass over

some sea before it arrived, and of course lick up some vapor. I afterwards indeed doubted whether it might be just only so far as related to the city of London, where I resided, because there are many causes of moisture in the city air which do not exist to the same degree in the country, such as the brewers' and dyers' boiling caldrons, and the great number of pots and tea-kettles continually on the fire, sending forth abundance of vapor, and also the number of animals who by their breath continually increase it; to which may be added, that even the vast quantity of sea coals burnt there do, in kindling, discharge a great deal of moisture.

When I was in England the last time, you also made for me a little achromatic pocket telescope; the body was brass, and it had a round case (I think of thin wood) covered with shagreen. All the while I remained in England, though possibly there might be some small changes in the dimensions of this case, I neither perceived nor suspected any. There was always comfortable room for the telescope to slip in and out. But soon after I arrived in America, which was in May, 1775, the case became too small for the instrument. It was with much difficulty and various contrivances that I got it out, and I could never after get it in again during my stay there, which was eighteen months. I brought it with me to Europe, but left the case as useless, imagining that I should find the continental air of France as dry as that of Pennsylvania, where my magnet-box had also returned a second time to its narrowness, and pinched the pieces, as heretofore, obliging me,

too, to scrape the sealing-wax off the ends of the shutter.

I had not been long in France before I was surprised to find that my box was become as large as it had always been in England; the magnets entered and came out with the same freedom, and, when in, I could rattle them against its sides; this has continued to be the case without sensible variation. My habitation is out of Paris, distant almost a league, so that the moist air of the city cannot be supposed to have much effect upon the box. I am upon a high, dry hill, in a free air, as likely to be dry as any air in France. Whence it seems probable that the air of England in general may, as well as that of London, be moister than the air of America, since that of France is so, and in a part so distant from the sea.

The greater dryness of the air in America appears from some other observations. The cabinet work formerly sent us from London, which consisted in thin plates of fine wood glued upon fir, never would stand with us; the veneering, as those plates are called, would get loose and come off; both woods shrinking, and their grains often crossing, they were for ever cracking and flying. And in my electrical experiments there, it was remarkable that a mahogany table, on which my jars stood under the prime conductor to be charged, would often be so dry, particularly when the wind had been some time at northwest, which with us is a very drying wind, as to isolate the jars, and prevent their being charged till I had formed a communication between their coatings and the earth. I had a like table in London,

which I used for the same purpose all the time I resided there; but it was never so dry as to refuse conducting the electricity.

Now what I would beg leave to recommend to you, is, that you would recollect, if you can, the species of mahogany of which you made my box, for you know there is a good deal of difference in woods that go under that name; or, if that cannot be, that you would take a number of pieces of the closest and finest grained mahogany that you can meet with, plane them to the thinness of about a line, and the width of about two inches across the grain, and fix each of the pieces in some instrument that you can contrive, which will permit them to contract and dilate, and will show, in sensible degrees, by a movable hand upon a marked scale, the otherwise less sensible quantities of such contraction and dilatation. If these instruments are all kept in the same place while making, and are graduated together while subject to the same degrees of moisture or dryness, I apprehend you will have so many comparable hygrometers which, being sent into different countries, and continued there for some time, will find and show there the mean of the different dryness and moisture of the air of those countries and that with much less trouble than by any hygrometer hitherto in use. With great esteem, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXIX

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 22 Novembre, 1780.

Monseigneur:—M. de Chaumont m'ayant procuré par pure bonne volonté des étoffes pour l'habillement des troupes américaines, me demande aujourd'huy que je lui assure le remboursement en France des lettres de change que je lui ai promises sur le Congrès, et dont je ne doute nullement qu'il y sera fait honneur. J'ai l'honneur de mettre sous les yeux de votre Excellence la lettre que M. de Chaumont m'a écrite à ce sujet, pour la supplier de m'aider s'il est possible à donner à M. de Chaumont les assurances qu'il me demande.

Je suis avec respect, monseigneur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXX

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES

Versailles, 26 November, 1780.

Sir:—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write me on the 19th instant, and with it the resolutions of Congress, ordering drafts upon you to the amount of about one million four hundred thousand livres. You can easily imagine my astonishment at your request of the necessary funds to meet these drafts, since you perfectly well know the extraordinary efforts which I have made

thus far to assist you and to support your credit; and especially since you cannot have forgotten the demands you lately made upon me. Nevertheless, sir, I am very desirous of assisting you out of the embarrassed situation in which these repeated drafts of Congress have placed you; and for this purpose I shall endeavor to procure for you, for the next year, the same aid that I have been able to furnish in the course of the present. I cannot but believe sir, that Congress will faithfully abide by what it now promises you, that in future no drafts shall be made upon you, unless the necessary funds are sent to meet them. I have the honor to be, sir, with great sincerity, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

DCCCCXXXI

EXTRACT FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS TO B. FRANKLIN, ESQ., MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AT THE COURT OF FRANCE

In Congress, 28 November, 1780.

You will give Col. Palfrey, lately Paymaster-General for our armies, and now our Consul in France,[1] all the support which is necessary for the exercise of his consular functions, as well as for the effectual execution of the special authority and instructions which he will communicate. The sufferings of our army for want of the clothing and arms, which the grant of his most Christian Majesty and

[1] Col. Palfrey died on his passage out.

your own despatches gave us reason to expect, and the absolute and increasing necessity of their being immediately forwarded to give efficacy to our future operations, will sufficiently impress upon you the dangerous consequences of a further disappointment.

With respect to the loan we foresee that the sum which we ask will be greatly inadequate to our wants. We wish, however, to depend as much as possible on our internal exertions.

You are hereby empowered to pledge the faith of the United States by executing such securities or obligations for the payment of the money as you may think proper; and also that the interest shall not be reduced, nor the principal paid, during the term for which the same shall have been borrowed, without the consent of the lenders or their representatives.

You are to stipulate for the payment of both principal and interest in specie.

The loan must prove ineffectual unless the specie is actually remitted. Experience has shown that the negotiation of bills is attended with unsupportable loss and disadvantage. His most Christian Majesty, we are persuaded, will see in the strongest light the necessity of despatching an effective naval armament to the American seas. This is a measure of such vast moment that your utmost diligence will be employed to give it success. By such a conveyance the specie may be remitted in different ships of war with a prospect of safety.

DCCCCXXXII

FROM JOHN ADAMS

AMSTERDAM, 30 November, 1780.

SIR:—I was duly honored with your letter of the 8th of October by Mr. Searle. I thank you, sir, for enclosing the resolution of Congress respecting my salary and Mr. Dana's. I wish I could see a prospect of relieving you from this burden, as well as that of the bills of exchange drawn upon Mr. Laurens; but at present there is not a prospect of obtaining a shilling. What turn affairs may take, it is impossible to foresee. Some gentlemen tell me that a few months, or indeed weeks, may produce events which will open the purses to me; but I think that our want of credit here is owing to causes that are more permanent. I never had any just idea of this country until I came here; if, indeed, I have now. I have received money of the house of Horneca, Fizeau, & Grand, on account of Mr. F. Grand of Paris, for my subsistence; and, if you have no objection, I will continue in this way.

Mr. Searle's conversation is a cordial to me. He gives a charming, sanguine representation of our affairs, such as I am very well disposed to believe, and such as I should give myself, if interrogated, according to the best of my knowledge. But we have a hard conflict to go through yet.

The correspondence you mention between his Excellency the Count de Vergennes and me, I transmitted regularly to Congress in the season of it from Paris, and other copies since my arrival in Amsterdam, both without any comments.

The letter I mentioned I believe was from your Excellency to M. Dumas, who informs me that there has been none to the Grand Pensionary but the one which your Excellency wrote when I was at Passy, which I remember very well. The republic, it is said, for it is hard to come at the truth, have on the one hand acceded to the armed neutrality, and on the other have disavowed the conduct of Amsterdam. This, it is hoped, will appease all nations for the present, and it may for what I know. We shall see. I should be the less surprised at Great Britain's treating the United Provinces like an English colony, if I did not every day hear the language and sentiments of English colonists. But, if she treats all her colonies with equal tyranny, it may make them all in time equally independent.

A gentleman here has received a commission from England to hire as many vessels as he possibly can, to carry troops to America. This I have certain information of. It is also given out that Sir Joseph Yorke has demanded and obtained permission of the States to do it; but this, I believe, is an English report. It is also said that the burgomasters of the city have signified abroad that it would be disagreeable if anybody should hire the ships. But this may be only *bruit*. It shows the English want of shipping, their intention to send troops, and their cunning to get away from this nation both their ships and seamen. I have the honor to be, etc.,

John Adams.

DCCCCXXXIII

TO MR. SEARLE

PASSY, 30 November, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I received your kind letter of the 20th, and am very sensible of your friendship. Arnold's baseness and treachery is astonishing. I thank you for the account you give me of his preceding conduct, which I never knew before, and shall make a proper use of.[1] I have just received a very particular account of his plot, which is too long to transcribe by this post, but you will see it by next. In the mean-

[1] Brigadier-General Arnold had been wounded at the siege of Quebec, and being only fit for a sedentary command was placed in command of the new fortifications at West Point, then a point of the most critical military importance. Though he had rendered his country distinguished services in the field, he was a man of extravagant habits, which he insisted upon indulging without regard to his resources or his engagements. He was court-martialled by direction of Congress and ordered to be reprimanded by the Commander-in-Chief for abusing his powers while stationed at Philadelphia. Stung by what he professed to consider the ingratitude of his country and driven to desperation by his creditors, he allowed himself to be beguiled into negotiations with Sir Henry Clinton, to betray West Point to him. He was to receive for this service, according to the original contract, £30,000 and the rank of brigadier-general in the British army. Major André, one of Sir Henry Clinton's staff, and the agent through which this treason was negotiated, was captured inside the American lines, with the compromising information which Arnold had furnished him concealed in his boots. He was tried and convicted as a spy and hung on the 2d of October, 1780. Arnold escaped, was made a brigadier-general in the British army, and afterwards served against his countrymen in Virginia. The British officers showed great repugnance to serving with him and treated him with merited contempt. His vices precipitated him into an abyss of troubles, and he ended his days in poverty and disgrace. Arnold was the only officer in the American army of the Revolution who proved unfaithful to the cause of independence and turned his sword against his compatriots. (*See* letter to Lafayette dated May 14, 1781.)—EDITOR.

time Mr. Adams will communicate to you an extract of a comfortable letter to me from Newport. General Washington was at Bergen, near New York, the 19th October. I hope your fears that there may be Arnolds at Paris are groundless. But in such time one cannot be too much on one's guard, and I am obliged to you for the caution.

With great esteem I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXXIV

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 2 December, 1780.

Sir:—The many mutual advantages, that must arise from carrying into execution the proposition already communicated to Congress of furnishing provisions to the king's forces in America, to be paid for here, have, I make no doubt, already induced them to begin that operation. But, as the proposition has lately been renewed to me, on occasion of my requesting further aids of money, to answer the unexpected drafts drawn upon me, ordered by the resolutions of May and August last, which drafts it is absolutely necessary I should find funds to pay; and as the Congress have long desired to have the means of forming funds in Europe, and an easier, cheaper, and safer method cannot possibly be contrived; and as I see, by the Journals of February, that the several States were to furnish provisions in quantities, instead of supplies of money, whereby

much will be in the disposition in Congress, I flatter myself that they will not disapprove of my engaging in their behalf with the minister of the finances here, that they will cause to be delivered for the king's land and sea forces in North America such provisions as may be wanted from time to time, to the amount of four hundred thousand dollars, the said provisions to be furnished at the current prices, for which they might be bought with silver specie.

I have constantly done my utmost to support the credit of Congress, by procuring wherewith punctually to pay all their drafts, and I have no doubt of their care to support mine in this instance by fulfilling honorably my engagement; in which case, receipts in due form should be taken of the person to whom the provisions are delivered in the several States, and those receipts sent to me here. With great respect, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—This value, four hundred thousand dollars, is to be considered as exclusive of any provisions already furnished; but the receipts for those should also be sent me, if not paid for there.

DCCCCXXXV

TO JAMES LOVELL

Passy, 2 December, 1780.

Sir:—I duly received your several favors of August the 15th and September the 7th, with the resolves of Congress for drawing on me bills extraordinary, to

the amount of near three hundred thousand dollars. To keep up the credit of Congress, I had already engaged for those drawn on Mr. Laurens. You cannot conceive how much these things perplex and distress me; for, the practice of this government being yearly to apportion the revenue to the several expected services, any after-demands made, which the treasury is not furnished to supply, meet with great difficulty, and are very disagreeable to the ministers. To enable me to look these drafts in the face, I have agreed to a proposal contained in the enclosed letter to the President, of furnishing provisions to the king's forces in America, which proposal I hope will be approved and executed, and that the Congress will strictly comply with the assurance you have given me, not to draw on me any more without first knowing that they have funds in my hands.

I wrote to you more fully by Capt. Jones. He sailed some time since in the *Ariel*, but met with a severe storm that entirely dismasted him, and obliged him to put back for France. He has been long refitting, but will sail again soon. Every thing goes well here. With great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXXVI

TO REV. DR. COOPER, BOSTON

Passy, 2 December, 1780.

Reverend and Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of the 8th of September, and am much obliged

by the intelligence it contained. Please make my compliments of congratulation acceptable to Mr. Hancock on his being chosen the first governor of his free countrymen. I am persuaded he will fill the seat with propriety and dignity.

Dr. Lee's accusation of Capt. Landais for insanity was probably well founded; as in my opinion would have been the same accusation, if it had been brought by Landais against Lee; for though neither of them are permanently mad, they are both so at times; and the insanity of the latter is the most mischievous.

Your little grandson is a fine boy, behaves genteelly, and takes his learning admirably. Mr. Adams being gone to Holland, has left him in my care. He does not seem well satisfied with his school; and the master and mistress complain of his being turbulent and factious and having in him too much of the insurgent. I give him occasionally my best advice, and I hope those little unpleasantnesses will by degrees wear off. I have paid his last quarter.

The English in a late memorial have threatened the Dutch with much insolence. Some imagine it must produce a war. Others, relying on the Batavian phlegm and patience, think it will pass over. Holland has, however, at length acceded to the armed neutrality.

At the request of the Abbé de Raynal I send you the enclosed; and I wish you or Mr. Bowdoin would answer the questions.

I beg the continuance of your useful letters. I shall soon write to you more fully; remaining with the most perfect esteem, dear sir, etc.

DCCCCXXXVII

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

PASSY, 3 December, 1780.

DEAR SIR:—I have before me yours of the 9th and 16th of November, which I think are the last I received from you. With regard to the augmentation of your salary, I would not have you place too great a dependence on it, lest a disappointment should thereby be rendered more afflicting.

If a good peace were once established, we should soon be richer, and better able to reward those that serve us. At present the expense of the war hangs heavy on the United States, and we cannot pay like old and rich kingdoms. Mr. William Lee has, as you observe, acted very imprudently in that affair; but perhaps some good may come of it.

Mr. Adams has written to me for a copy of a letter I formerly wrote to ——. If you have such a one please to give it to him. I imagine that he rather means a letter I wrote to you, in which I represented our girl as a jolly one, and who would be a good fortune in time, etc. I have no copy of that. If you still have that letter, please to give Mr. Adams a copy of that also.

I wish much to see the answer that their High Mightinesses will give to the insolent memorial presented by Sir Joseph Yorke. If they comply with it, and punish or censure the Pensionary of Amsterdam, I shall think it a *pierre de touche* for the Stadtholder, as well as for the King of England; and that neither Mr. Adams will be safe at Amsterdam, nor our ships

in any port of Holland. Let me therefore know, by the earliest means, the turn this affair is like to take, that I may advertise our government and our merchants, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXXVIII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 3 December, 1780.

Sir:—I duly received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me on the 12th July past, by Mr. Searle, and have paid the bills drawn on me by order of Congress, in favor of the President and Council of Pennsylvania, for one thousand pounds sterling, which were presented by him. He is at present in Holland.

The news of Mr. Laurens having been taken must have reached you long since; he is confined in the Tower, but of late has some more liberty for taking air and exercise than first was allowed him. Certain papers found with him, relating to the drafts of a treaty proposed in Holland, have been sent over to the Stadtholder, who laid them before their High Mightinesses, who communicated them to the government of the city of Amsterdam, which justified the transaction. This has drawn from England a memorial, delivered by Sir Joseph Yorke, demanding, that the Pensionary and magistrates of that city should be punished, and declaring, that the king will resent a refusal of the States to comply with this

demand. What answer will be given to this insolent memorial we do not yet know. But I hear it has produced much displeasure in Holland; and it is thought to have occasioned a more prompt accession to the armed neutrality, which had before met with obstructions from the English party there.

We have met with a variety of unaccountable delays and difficulties in the affair of shipping the clothing and stores. The *Alliance* went away without taking her part. The *Ariel* sailed, but met with a storm at sea that dismasted her, and obliged her to return to France. She is nearly again ready to sail. Mr. Ross, with his cargo of clothes in the *Duke of Leinster*, sailed under convoy of the *Ariel*, but did not return with her, and I hope may get safe to America. The great ship we hired to come to L'Orient and take in the rest of what we had to send, has been long unexpectedly detained at Bordeaux. I am afraid the army has suffered for want of clothes; but it has been as impossible for me to avoid, as it was to foresee, these delays.

The late Minister of the Marine here, M. de Sartine, is removed, and his place supplied by M. le Marquis de Castries. But this change does not affect the general system of the court, which continues favorable to us.

I have received a copy of the resolutions of Congress of the 19th of May, and the 9th, 15th, 23d, and 30th of August, directing bills to be drawn on me for near three hundred thousand dollars. I shall accept the bills, hoping the Congress will approve of, and readily comply with, the proposition contained in a

letter to your Excellency, accompanying this, dated the 2d instant. Probably an answer may arrive here before many of those bills shall become due, as few of them are yet arrived. If that answer ratifies the agreement I have made, I shall have no difficulty in finding means to pay the rest. If not, I shall scarce be able to bear the reproaches of merchants, that I have misled them to their loss by my acceptations, which gave a promise of payment that, not being fulfilled, has deranged their affairs; to say nothing of the power I am told the Consul's Court has here over the persons, even of ministers, in the case of bills of exchange. Let me, therefore, beg your Excellency to use your endeavors with Congress, that this matter may be immediately attended to.

Mr. Jay, no doubt, has acquainted you with his difficulties respecting the drafts upon him. I am sorry I cannot extricate him, but I hope he will still find means.

The *Mars*, an armed ship belonging to the State of Massachusetts, in her way to France, took and sent to New England a Portuguese ship bound to Cork with salt, belonging to some merchants there. The Portuguese captain, who is brought in here, complains heavily of ill usage and plunder, besides taking his vessel; and the ambassador of that nation has communicated to me these complaints, together with all the papers proving the property of the vessel, etc., representing at the same time the good disposition of the queen towards our States, and his wishes that nothing might lessen it, or tend to prevent or delay a complete good understanding between the two

nations. I advised that the owners should send over their claim, and empower some person to prosecute it, in which case I did not doubt our courts would do them justice. I hope the Congress may think fit to take some notice of this affair, and not only forward a speedy decision, but give orders to our cruisers not to meddle with neutral ships for the future, it being a practice apt to produce ill blood, and contrary to the spirit of the new league, which is approved by all Europe; and the English property found in such vessels will hardly pay the damages brought on us by the irregular proceedings of our captains in endeavoring to get at such property. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXXXIX

TO MR. JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Passy, 27 December, 1780.

Dear Cousin:—I received yours of the 19th, acquainting me with your draft in favor of M. de Chaumont for 428,330Ls. The exigencies of his affairs had before induced me to give him, under a guaranty of the minister, a credit with M. Grand for 400,000, payable quarterly in the ensuing year, which M. G. discounted for him. I have also since the second determination against him at Nantes accepted his drafts for 200,000Ls. on account of the freight, on his engagement to return me that sum, if the ship does not arrive at L'Orient, which bills I suppose he has discounted likewise; so he goes on paying his

acceptances of your drafts. He is not naturally inclined to chicaneries, but his embarrassments have made him say and do things inconsistent with his character, which I only mention as a caution to you, not to go out of your depth in business, for the best swimmer may be seized with a cramp. You have been reflected on a little for your delay in sending the invoice or amount of the cloths; pray send the charges as soon as possible.

The English have declared war against Holland. Therefore miss no opportunity of sending advice of it to America.

I am ever your affectionate uncle,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXL

Fragment of a Diary [1]

Dec. 18, 1780.—Gave an order to Major Broughton, of Marblehead, a returning prisoner, for 5 louis, to help him down to a seaport.

Certified Capt. James La Clause's commission and other American papers.

Wrote to Mr. Hodgson, London, that I had received his account of the expenditure of the £100 on the prisoners, and promised him £150 more.

Gave a letter of recommendation of l'Abbé Robin to Mr. Williams, of Boston, and sent it after him by an officer, who is to go if he can in the *Ariel*. Sent by the same person some newspapers to Congress.

Consented in conversation with Mr. Grand that

[1] Endorsed: "Part of Journal, 1780."

Mr. Williams, on being put in possession of the policies of insurance of the ship *Marquis de Lafayette*, for 200,000 livres, should draw on me for the freight to that amount.

Mr. Chaumont writes, pressing an advance of the money on security.

Replied that if the security was such as the Congress banker approved of, I would advance the sum.

Heard that transports are taking up here for America, and that bank bills in England had been counterfeited to a great amount.

Dec. 19th.—Went to Versailles at M. Vergennes'; much was said to me in favor of M. de Chaumont's demand. It was owned that he had been wrong in demanding as a right what he ought to have asked as a favor; but that affairs among friends should not be transacted with rigor, but amicably and with indulgent allowances. I found I had been represented as unkindly exact in the business. I promised to do all in my power to make it easy to Mr. Chaumont. He came to me in the evening after my return; but with much heat against Mr. Grand, which I endeavored to allay, as it was really very unjust. Offered him to accept his bills drawn on me, as the operation through Mr. Williams at Nantes would take too much time to suit with his exigencies. He said he would consult with his banker. Exclaimed much against the judgment at Nantes, etc.

Requested Mr. Grand to transfer out of the public cash the amount of the several balances of my private accounts with the Congress, and give me credit for the same in my particular account.

Dec. 20th.—Certified or as they call it here legalized the papers relative to the taking a Portuguese ship by the *Mars* of Boston, and sent them to the Porto' ambass.

Accepted M. de Chaumont's drafts dated November 10 for the 200,000 livres freight at 4 usances, and he gave me his engagement to return the money in case the ship *Marquis de Lafayette* did not arrive at L'Orient to take in our goods.

Prince de Montbarey, *Ministre de la Guerre*, resigns. His successor not yet known.

Dec. 21st.—Wrote to M. de Chaumont pressingly for his account with the Congress, that it may be settled now Mr. Deane is here.

M. de Segur succeeds the Prince de Montbarey.

Dec. 22d.—Received an account between Mr. Chaumont and Mr. Deane, which includes Congress artic [mutilated]; copy it, as it must be sent to Mr. Deane.

Dec. 23d.—Hear by letters from L'Orient of the departure of Capt. Jones in the *Ariel* on the 18th.

Dec. 24th.—Received Gourlade & Moylan's account of fresh expenses, upward of £20,000, by Capt. Jones.

Two young Englishmen, Scot and Williams, would go to America; discouraged them.

Dec. 25th.—Gave an order to Mr. Grand to remit £150 sterling to Mr. Wm. Hodgson, London, for the relief of American prisoners.

Received information from a good hand that the G. Pensionaire had been with Sir J. Y. and acquainted him that an answer would be given to his memorials, but that it could not be precipitated contrary to the

constitution; it was necessary to have the advice of the provinces.

The S. H. has behaved well in the resolution for arming.

The Duke A. G. C., the Pensionary of Amsterdam, a brave, steady man.

Dec. 26th.—Went to Versailles to assist at the ceremony of condolence on the death of the Empress Queen. All the foreign ministers in deep mourning —flopped hats and crape, long black cloaks, etc. The Nuncio pronounced the compliments to the king and afterwards to the queen in her apartments. M. de Vergennes told me of the war declared by England against Holland. Visited at the new Ministers of War and Marine; neither of them at home. Much fatigued by the going twice up and down the palace stairs, from the tenderness of my feet and weakness of my knees; therefore did not go the rounds. Declined dining with M. de Vergennes, as inconsistent with my present mode of living, which is simple, till I have recovered my strength. Took a partridge with M. de Chaumont. No news yet of Count d'Estaing.

Wednesday, 27th.—Much talk about the new war. Hear of the hurricane in the West Indies. English fleet under Admiral Darby put into port. Wrote to J. Williams, at Nantes, to send advice to America by every possible opportunity of the English declaration against Holland.

Thursday, 28th.—Mr. Grand had some time since carried an advance of my salary for one quarter (*l.*15,000) out of the public monies, to my private

account; and I afterwards gave him a receipt for that sum, which should have been mentioned before.

Friday, 29th.—Went by particular invitation to the Sorbonne, to an assembly of the Faculty of Physic in the College Hall, where we had the éloge of my friend M. Dubourg and other pieces. Suffered by the cold.

M. de Chaumont has [mutilated] J. Williams' draft on me for *l.*428,000 on account of the cloth, but declined . . . why [? I know not why] presenting it. I ought to give him . . . [line here mutilated, the only words legible are "*Congress*," "*above*" or "*about*," and "*livres*."]

Saturday, 30th.—Breakfasted at Mad. Brillon's. Received of M. Grand *l.*4,800 on private account, which was put into the hands of W. T. Franklin to pay bills and family expenses.

Sunday, 31st.—Much company at dinner; among others, M. Perrier and M. Wilkinson, ingenious mechanicians. M. Romayne, of Hackinsack in the Jerseys. No news.

Monday, Jan. 1, 1781.—News that an expedition is on foot against Jersey and Guernsey, some frigates with transports and 2,500 men having sailed from Granville the 26th past.

Mr. Dana is returned from Holland, which he left the beginning of last month. Mr. Adams remains there, who writes me Dec. 1st, that there is little or no hopes of a loan.

Tuesday, Jan. 2d.—Went to Versailles. No foreign ministers there but one or two; the rest having been there yesterday. Visited the new Secretary at

War, who was very polite. Wrote to M. de Castries, Minister of the Marine. Not strong enough to go up to M. de Maurepas. Visited M. Le Roy, and dined with M. and Mad. de Renneval. News of disappointment of the Jersey expedition. Wind and tide contrary [mutilated; the word "*Etres*" only visible] the offices in part.

Wednesday, Jan. 3d.—Letters from Holland. The Dutch seem not to have known on the 28th past that war was actually declared against them. Informed here that the English court has sent copies of the papers taken with Mr. Laurens to the Northern courts, with aggravated complaints against the States-General; and that the States had also sent their justification. Important news expected by the return of the courier.

Thursday, Jan. 4th.—Learnt that the States had given orders for building 100 ships of war. Gave an order on Mr. Grand [mutilated; qr. "*for*"] paying Sabbatier's balance, the sum *l.*3,526 18 6 being for carriage of the clothing.

Friday, Jan. 5th.—Signed recommendation, to the ministers, of M. de La Neuville, officer formerly in the American service.

Saturday, Jan. 6th—Accepted a number of loan-office bills this day, and every day of the past week. No news yet of Count D'Estaing, which begins to give great uneasiness, as his fleet was not provided for so long a voyage.

Sunday, Jan. 7th.—News of the safe arrival of Count D'Estaing at Brest; more accounts of the terrible hurricane in the West Indies. Accepted a vast

number of loan-office bills. Some of the new drafts begin to appear.

Monday, Jan. 8th.—Accepted many bills. Hear from Holland that they had but just received news of the declaration of war against them, and that the English Church was burnt at the Hague, unknown by what means.

Tuesday, 9th.—Count D'Estaing arrives at Passy. Hear of ships arrived at L'Orient from America. No letters come up. Indisposed and did not go to court.

Wednesday, 10th.—Letters arrived from Philadelphia. Reports there of advantages gained to the southward; and that Leslie had quitted Virginia. Informed that my recall is to be moved for in Congress. News that the troops have made good their landing in Jersey and taken all but the castle.

Thursday, 11th.—Gave Mr. Dana copies of the letters between M. de Sartine and me concerning Mr. Dalton's affair. Proposed to him to examine the public accounts now while Mr. Deane was here, which he declined.

Friday, 12th.—Sign acceptation [qr. "*of*"; mutilated] many bills. They come thick.

Saturday, Jan. 13th.—Learn that there is a violent commotion in Holland: that the people are violently exasperated against the English, have thrown some into the canals; and those merchants of Amsterdam who have been known to favor them, dare not appear in the streets; that the return of their express to Russia brings good accounts of the favorable disposition of the Empress.

Sunday, Jan. 14th.—Mr. Grand acquaints me that he learns from Mr. Cotin, banker of M. de Chaumont, that the *Marquis de Lafayette* will be stopped by creditors of M. de Chaumont, unless 50,000 crowns are advanced, and submitted it to my consideration whether I had not better buy the ship. Vexed with the long delay on so many frivolous pretences, and seeing no end to them, and fearing to embarrass myself still further in affairs that I do not understand, I took at once the resolution of offering our contract for that ship to the government, to whom I hoped it might be agreeable to have her as a transport, as our goods would not fill her, she being gauged at 1,200 tons. Accordingly I requested Mr. Grand to go to Versailles and propose it to M. de Vergennes.

Monday, Jan. 15th.—Signed an authority to Mr. Bonfield to administer [mutilated] oath of allegiance to the United States to Mr. Vaughan.

Accepted above 200 bills, some of them new.

Mr. Grand calls on his return from Versailles, and acquaints me that Mr. Vergennes desires the proposition may be reduced to writing. Mr. Grand has accordingly made a draft, which he presented for my approbation.

Tuesday, Jan. 16th.—Went to Versailles and performed all the ceremonies, though with difficulty, my feet being still tender.

Left the pacquets for Mr. Jay with M. de Renneval, who promised to send them with the next courier.

Presented Mr. Grand's paper to M. de Vergennes, who told me he would try to arrange that matter for

me. I acquainted M. de Chaumont wit [mutilated] step [qr. "with the step"], who did not seem to approve of it.

Heard of the ill success of the troops in Jersey, who were defeated the same day they landed; 150 killed, 200 wounded, and the rest taken prisoners.

Wednesday, Jan. 17th.—Accepted many bills and wrote some letters.

Thursday, Jan. 18th.—Mr. Grand informs me that he has been at Versailles and spoken with M. de Vergennes and M. de Renneval; that the minister declined the proposition of taking the vessel on account of the government, but kindly offered to advance me the *l.*150,000 if I chose to pay that sum. He brought me also the project of an engagement drawn up by Mr. Cotin, by which I was to promise that payment, and he and Co. were to permit the vessel to depart. He left this paper for my consideration.

Friday, Jan. 19th.—Considering this demand of Messrs. Cotin & Jauge as an imposition, I determined not to submit to it, and wrote my reasons.

Relieved an American captain with five guineas to help him to L'Orient.

Saturday, Jan. 20th.—Gave a pass to a Bristol merchant to go to Spain. He was recommended to me as having been a great friend to American prisoners. His name [nothing has been written here apparently].

Sunday, Jan. 21st.—Mr. Jauge comes to talk with me about the ship, and intimated that if I refused to advance the *l.*150,000 I should not only be deprived

of the ship, but lose the freight I had advanced. I absolutely refused to comply.

Monday, Jan. 22d.—M. Grand informs me that Mr. Williams has drawn on me for 25,000 livres, to enable him to pay returned acceptances of M. de Chaumont. I ordered payment of his drafts. Received a letter from Mr. Williams and wrote an answer, which letters explained this affair. Letter from M. de Chaumont informing me he had received remittances from America. I congratulated him.

Tuesday, Jan. 23d.—Went to court and performed all the round of levees, though with much pain and difficulty, through the tenderness and feebleness of my feet and knees. M. Vergennes is ill and unable to hold long conferences. I dined there and had some conversation with M. Renneval, who told me I had misunderstood the proposition of advancing the 150,000 livres, or it had not been rightly represented to me; that it was not expected of me to advance more for M. de Chaumont; that the advance was to have been made by M. de Vergennes, etc. I see clearly, however, that the paper offered me to sign by Messrs. Cotin & Co. would have engaged me to be accountable for it. Had some conference with the Nuncio, who seemed inclined to encourage American vessels to come to the ecclesiastical state, acquainting me they had two good ports to receive us, Civitta Vecchia and Ancona, where there was a good deal of business done, and we should find good vente for our fish, etc. Hear I [no words legible].

Wednesday, Jan. 24th.—A great number of bills.

Visit at M. de Chaumont's in the evening; found him cold and dry. Receive a note from Mr. Searle, acquainting me with his [mutilated] sal [qr. *dismissal*, or *arrival*] from Holland on Saturday last.

Thursday, Jan. 25th.—Hear that M. de Chaumont pays again, being enabled by his remittances [mutilated] bills. Holland begins to move, and gives great encouragement [mutilated] *turing*. M. de L' [mutilated] comes to see me, and demands breakfast; chear [cheerful ?] and frank. Authorize Mr. Grand to pay the balance of Messrs. Jay's and Carmichael's salaries, and Mr. Digges' bill.

Friday, Jan. 26th.—Went to Paris to visit Princess Daschkaw; not at home. Visit Prince and Princess Masserano. He informs me that he despatches a messenger [a word or two obliterated] on Tuesday. Visit Duke de Rochefoucauld and Madame la Duchesse d'Enville. Visit Messrs. Dana and Searle; not at home. Leave invitations to dine with me on Sunday. Visit Comte d'Estaing; not at home. Mr. Turgot; not at home. Accept bills.

Saturday, Jan. 27th.—Write to Madrid and answer all Mr. Jay's and Mr. Carmichael's letters received during my illness.

Sunday, Jan. 28th.—Mr. Dana comes; Mr. Searle excuses himself. Invite him for Tuesday.

Monday, Jan. 29th.—Hear of the arrival of the *Duke of Leinster*, with Mr. Ross, at Philadelphia, which gives me great pleasure, as she had much cloth, etc., for the Congress. Despatched my letters for Madrid.

DCCCCXLI

FROM SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

PHILADELPHIA, 1 January, 1781.

SIR:—You will receive herewith enclosed a letter addressed to his most Christian Majesty, also a copy of the same for your information, together with instructions of the 29th of November and 27th of December for your government on the important subject contained in the letter to the King of France; likewise a copy of the instructions given to Colonel Laurens on the same subject, and a copy of the resolution of Congress respecting the declaration of the Empress of Russia.[1]

By these despatches you will be informed that Colonel Laurens is coming to France, charged with a special commission, with your advice and influence, to solicit the aids in money and other articles referred to in his instructions. It is probable he will sail from America in some fifteen or twenty days from this time. You will observe, nevertheless, that it is the pleasure and expectation of Congress, that you should not delay any measures for obtaining the aids requested, nor wait for the arrival of Mr. Laurens.

An estimate of the aids requested, except the twenty-five millions of livres, you have already received the last year; and no time ought to be lost in forwarding such aids as may be obtained.

Your wisdom, prudence, and zeal for the prosperity

[1] See the above papers in *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., pp. 176, 185; Vol. IX., p. 199.—*Journals of Congress*, October 5, 1780.

of the United States render it unnecessary for me to add any persuasives on this important subject. I have the honor to be, etc.,

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON,
President of Congress.

[*Letter from Congress to the King of France referred to in the preceding.*]

The United States of America in Congress assembled, to the Great, Faithful, and Beloved Friend and Ally, Louis the Sixteenth, King of France and Navarre.

GREAT, FAITHFUL, AND BELOVED FRIEND AND ALLY:—Persuaded of your Majesty's friendship and of your earnest desire to prosecute the war with glory and advantage to the alliance, we ought not to conceal from your Majesty the embarrassments which have attended our national affairs, and rendered the campaign unsuccessful.

A naval superiority in the American war having enabled the enemy, in the midst of last winter, to divide their army and extend the war in the Southern States, Charleston was subdued before a sufficient force could be assembled for its relief.

With unabated ardor, and at a vast expense, we prepared for the succeeding campaign—a campaign from which, in a dependence upon the co-operation of the squadron and troops generously destined by your Majesty for our assistance, we had formed the highest expectations. Again the enemy frustrated our measures. Your Majesty's succors were confined within the harbor of Newport, while the main

body of the British army took refuge in their fortresses and under the protection of their marine. Declining to hazard a battle in the open field, and regardless of their rank among the civilized nations, they descended to wage a predatory war. Britons and savages united in sudden irruptions on our northern and western frontiers, and marked their progress with blood and desolation.

The acquisition of Charleston, with the advantages gained in Georgia, and the defeat of a small army composed chiefly of militia which had been hastily collected to check their operations, encouraged the British commander in that quarter to penetrate through South Carolina into the interior parts of North Carolina; and the ordinary calamities of war were embittered by implacable vengeance. They did not, however, long enjoy their triumph. Instead of being depressed, impending danger served only to rouse our citizens to correspondent exertions, and by a series of gallant and successful enterprises they compelled the enemy to retreat with precipitation and disgrace.

They seem, however, resolved by all possible efforts not only to retain their posts in Georgia and South Carolina, but to renew their attempts on North Carolina. To divert the reinforcements destined for those States, they are now executing an enterprise against the sea-coast of Virginia, and from their preparations at New York and intelligence from Europe it is manifest that the four Southern States will now become a principal object of their hostilities.

It is the voice of the people and the resolution of Congress to prosecute the war with redoubled vigor, and to draw into the field a permanent and well appointed army of 35,000 regular troops. By this decisive effort we trust that we shall be able, under the Divine blessing, so effectually to co-operate with your Majesty's marine and land forces as to expel the common enemy from our country and render the great object of the alliance perpetual. But to accomplish an enterprise of such magnitude and so interesting to both nations, whatever may be our spirit and our exertions, we know that our internal resources must prove incompetent. The sincerity of this declaration will be manifest from a short review of our circumstances.

Unpractised in military arts and unprepared with the means of defence, we were suddenly invaded by a formidable and vindictive nation. We supported the unequal conflict for years with very little foreign aid but what was derived from your Majesty's generous friendship. Exertions uncommon even among the most wealthy and best established governments necessarily exhausted our finances, plunged us into debt and anticipated our taxes, while the depredations of an active enemy by sea and land made a deep impression on our commerce and our productions. Thus encompassed with difficulties in our representation to your Majesty of the 14th of June, 1779, we disclosed our wants and requested your Majesty to furnish us with clothing, arms, and ammunition for the last campaign, on the credit of the United States. We entertain a lively sense of your

Majesty's friendly disposition in enabling our minister to procure a part of these supplies, of which through unfortunate events a very small proportion hath arrived. The sufferings of our army from this disappointment have been so severe that we must rely on your Majesty's attention to our welfare for effectual assistance.

The articles of the estimate transmitted to our minister are essential to our army, and we flatter ourselves that through your Majesty's interposition, they will be supplied.

At a time when we feel ourselves strongly impressed by the weight of past obligations, it is with the utmost reluctance that we yield to the emergency of our affairs in requesting additional favors. An unreserved confidence in your Majesty and a well grounded assurance that we ask no more than is necessary to enable us effectually to co-operate with your Majesty in terminating the war with glory and success, must be our justification.

It is well known that when the King of Great Britain found himself unable to subdue the populous States of North America by force, or to seduce them by art to relinquish the alliance with your Majesty, he resolved to protract the war in expectation that the loss of our commerce and the derangement of our finances must eventually compel us to submit to his domination. Apprised of the necessity of foreign aids of money to support us in a contest with a nation so rich and powerful, we have long since authorized our Ministers to borrow a sufficient sum in your Majesty's dominion and in Spain and Holland on the

credit of these United States. We now view the prospect of a disappointment with the deeper concern, as the late misfortunes in the southern States and the ravages of the northern and western frontiers have, in a very considerable degree, impaired our internal resources. From a full investigation of our circumstances, it is manifest that, in aid of our utmost exertions, a foreign loan of specie, at least to the amount of twenty-five millions of livres, will be indispensably necessary for a vigorous prosecution of the war.

On an occasion, with which the independence of these United States and your Majesty's glory are so intimately connected, we are constrained to request your Majesty effectually to support the applications of our ministers for that loan. So essential is it to the common cause, that we shall without it be pressed with wants and distresses which may render all our efforts languid, precarious, and undecisive. Whether it shall please your Majesty to stipulate for this necessary aid as our security, or to advance it from your royal coffers, we do hereby solemnly pledge the faith of these United States to indemnify or reimburse your Majesty, according to the nature of the case, both for principal and interest, in such manner as shall be agreed upon with our minister at your Majesty's court.

We beseech the Supreme Disposer of events to keep your Majesty in his holy protection, and long to continue to France the blessings arising from the administration of a Prince who nobly asserts the rights of mankind.

Done at Philadelphia, the twenty-second day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty, and in the fifth year of our independence, by the Congress of the United States of North America.

Your faithful friends and allies.

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President.*

Attest:

CHAS. THOMSON, *Secretary.*

DCCCCXLII

FROM M. DE MARBOIS, SECRETARY TO THE FRENCH LEGATION IN THE UNITED STATES

PHILADELPHIA, 4 January, 1781.

SIR:—I have desired Colonel Laurens to recall me particularly to your recollection, and I have no doubt he will faithfully do so. Still I cannot help wishing, for my own satisfaction, to say a few words to you of persons here, whom I know to be very dear to you. Mr. and Mrs. Bache and their children are in excellent health. Mrs. Bache does not yet give up the hope of going to see you in France, and I urge her much to make the voyage.

If there are in Europe any women who need a model of attachment to domestic duties and love for their country, Mrs. Bache may be pointed out to them as such. She passed a part of the last year in exertions to rouse the zeal of the Pennsylvania ladies; and she made on this occasion such a happy use of

the eloquence which you know she possesses, that a large part of the American army was provided with shirts, bought with their money or made by their hands. In her applications for this purpose, she showed the most indefatigable zeal, and the most unwearied perseverance, and a courage in asking, which surpassed even the obstinate reluctance of the Quakers in refusing. Rivington tried to turn her zeal into ridicule. Her patriotism, he called superstition and foolish fanaticism; he pretended that her officiousness went beyond all bounds. In a word, she could not have been praised more skilfully.[1]

This honest Rivington made a fairer hit, in publishing lately a number of intercepted letters. You will see them in the English papers; therefore I will not anticipate the reflections they will lead you to make. Congress was wise enough to take no notice of them. The English may find there new proofs of the wants of the allies, but they can see neither discouragement, nor despondency, nor disaffection, nor the least trace of coldness between these allies, nor the shadow of a desire to draw nearer to themselves; and that is certainly what they would most desire to find. I am, with great respect, sir, etc.,

De Marbois.

P. S.—The Chevalier de la Luzerne begs to present you his respectful compliments. Have the goodness also to remember us to your grandson.

[1] See two letters from General Washington to Mrs. Bache and other ladies on this subject, in *Washington's Writings*, Vol. VII., pp. 376, 408.

DCCCCXLIII

TO BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE [1]

PASSY, 18 January, 1781.

SIR:—I received your obliging letter of the 16th past, enclosing one from my dear friend, Dr. Fothergill. I was happy to hear from him that he was quite free of the disorder that had like to have removed him last summer. But I had soon after a letter from another friend, acquainting me that he was again dangerously ill of the same malady; and the newspapers have since announced his death. I condole with you most sincerely on this occasion. I think a worthier man never lived. For, besides his constant readiness to serve his friends, he was always studying and projecting something for the good of his country and of mankind in general, and putting others, who had it in their power, on executing what was out of his own reach; but whatever was within it he took care to do himself; and his incredible industry and unwearied activity enabled him to do much more than can now be ever known, his modesty being equal to his other virtues.

I shall take care to forward his letter to Mr. Pemberton. Enclosed is one I have just received under cover from that gentleman. You will take care to convey it by some safe opportunity to London.

With hearty wishes for your prosperity and success in your profession, and that you may be a good copy of your deceased relation, I am your friend and humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

[1] At this time a student of medicine at Leyden.

DCCCCXLIV

TO CHARLES W. F. DUMAS

Passy, 18 January, 1781.

Dear Sir:—Since my last I have been favored by yours of December 1st, 7th, 14th, 21st, 25th, and January 1st, by which you have kept me constantly well informed of the state of affairs. Accept my thanks. You may depend on my mentioning your diligence and services to Congress in the manner they merit.

Though I have been some weeks free from the gout, my feet are still tender, and my knees feeble; so that going up and down stairs is exceedingly difficult and inconvenient to me. This has prevented my going much out, so that I had not the honor I wished of waiting on the ambassador when he was here, and paying the respects I owe him; and he returned suddenly.

I much approve of the step you took the 16th of December, before Messrs. Adams and Searle. I received a copy. I wondered to find that you had not in Holland, on the 28th, received the declaration of war, but have since learnt how it happened. Surely there never was a more unjust war; it is manifestly such from their own manifesto. The spirit of rapine dictated it; and, in my opinion, every man in England who fits out a privateer to take advantage of it, has the same spirit, and would rob on the highway in his own country, if he was not restrained by fear of the gallows.[1] They have qualified poor Captain

[1] England had declared war against Holland on the 20th of December preceding. The immediate cause was the capture of an American

Jones with the title of pirate, who was only at war with England; but, if it be a good definition of a pirate, that he is *hostis humani generis*, they are much more pirates than he, having already made great progress towards being at war with all the world. If God governs, as I firmly believe, it is impossible such wickedness should long prosper.

You will receive this by Mr. Deane, who has a great regard for you, and whom I recommend to your civilities, though the gentlemen at present with you may be prejudiced against him; prejudices that time will cause to vanish, by showing that they were groundless. I enclose a package for Leyden, which I shall be glad to hear is delivered safe, and therefore desire your care of it. I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P. S.—*January 20th.*—Since writing the above I have received yours of the 12th instant. I am glad to hear that the affairs of the republic have taken so good a turn in Russia. With this you will receive three letters for Mr. Laurens, which I request you would forward to Mr. Adams. Be of good courage, and keep up your spirits. Your last letter has a melancholy turn. Do you take sufficient bodily exercise? Walking is an excellent thing for those whose employment is chiefly sedentary.

packet ship by a British cruiser, and Mr. Laurens, late President of Congress, on a mission to conclude a treaty between Congress and the States-General. The papers taken from Mr. Laurens contained not only his credentials, but disclosed also the existence of a secret treaty of friendship and commerce executed by the representative of Congress and the States-General two years before. The English ambassador at The Hague was instructed to demand a disavowal of that treaty. No answer being returned, the declaration of war followed.—Editor.

DCCCCXLV

TO MISS GEORGIANA SHIPLEY

. . . Must now be next its end, as I have completed my 75th year I could wish to see my dear friends of your family once more before I withdraw, but I see no prospect of enjoying that felicity. Let me at least have that of hearing from you a little oftener.

I do not understand the coldness you mention of the nights in the desert. I never before heard of such an observation. If you have learnt what was the design of cold and how it was observed, and what difference between the night and the day, you will oblige me by communicating it. I like to see that you retain a taste for philosophical enquiries.

I received your very kind letter by Madame —— [*illegible in Ms.*], with whom and the princess, her mother, I am much pleased, though I have not seen them so often as I wished, living as I do out of Paris.

I am glad to hear that you all passed the summer so agreeably in Wales, and I felicitate you as the first joy, on the increase of your brother's family.

Accept my thanks for your friendly verses and good wishes. How many talents you possess! Painting, poetry, languages, etc., etc. All valuable, but your good heart is worth the whole.

Your mention of the summer house brings fresh to my mind all the pleasures I enjoyed in the sweet retreat at Twyford: the hours of agreeable and instructive conversation with the amiable family at

table; with its father alone; the delightful walks in the gardens and neighboring grounds,—pleasures past and gone forever! Since I have had your father's picture I am grown more covetous of the rest; every time I look at your second drawing I have regretted that you have not given to your Juno the face of Anna Maria, to Venus that of Emily or Betsy, and to Cupid that of Emily's child, as it would have cost you but little more trouble. I must, however, beg that you will make me up a complete set of your profiles, which are more easily done. You formerly obliged me with that of the father, an excellent one. Let me also have that of the good mother, and of all the children. It will help me to fancy myself among you, and to enjoy more perfectly in idea, the pleasure of your society. My little fellow-traveller, the sprightly Hetty, with whose sensible prattle I was so much entertained, why does she not write to me? If Paris affords any thing that any of you wish to have, mention it. You will oblige me. It affords every thing but *peace!* Ah! when shall we again enjoy that blessing?

Next to seeing our friends is the pleasure of hearing from them, and learning how they live. Your accounts of your journeys and how you pass your summers please me much. I flatter myself you will like to know something of the same kind relating to me. I inhabit a clean, well-built village situate on a hill, in a fine air, with a beautiful prospect, about two miles [*Incomplete*].

DCCCCXLVI

TO DAVID BARCLAY

PASSY, 12 February, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I condole with you most sincerely on the loss of our dear friend, Dr. Fothergill. I hope that some one that knew him well will do justice to his memory, by an account of his life and character. He was a great doer of good. How much might have been done, and how much mischief prevented, if his, your, and my joint endeavors in a certain melancholy affair, had been attended to.[1] With great respect and esteem, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCXLVII

TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM

PASSY, 12 February, 1781.

SIR:—I have received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 12th ultimo. Enclosed

[1] The allusion here is to the negotiation which was attempted between Dr. Franklin, Dr. Fothergill, Mr. Barclay, and Lord Howe, a short time before Dr. Franklin left England. In a letter to Dr. Lettsom, respecting Dr. Fothergill, dated March 17, 1783, he wrote as follows: "Our late excellent friend was always proposing something for the good of mankind. You will find instances of this kind in one of his letters, which I enclose, the only one I can at present lay my hand on. I have some very valuable ones in America, if they are not lost in the late confusions. Just before I left England, he, in conjunction with Mr. Barclay and myself, labored hard to prevent the coming war; but our endeavors were fruitless. This transaction is alluded to in the first page. If we may estimate the goodness of a man by his disposition to do good, and his constant endeavors and success in doing it, I can hardly conceive that a better man has ever existed."—Lettsom's *Life of Dr. Fothergill*, p. 177.

with this I send you the passport desired, which I hope will be respected and effectual. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

PASSPORT

To all Captains and Commanders of Vessels of War belonging to the Thirteen United States of America, or either of them, or to any of the Citizens of the said States, or to any of the Allies thereof.

Gentlemen:—It being authentically represented to me, that the worthy citizens of Dublin, touched with the general calamities with which Divine Providence has thought fit lately to visit the West India Islands, have charitably resolved to contribute to their relief, by sending them some provisions and clothing; and, as the principles of common humanity require of us to assist our fellow-creatures, though enemies, when distressed by the hand of God, and by no means to impede the benevolence of those who commiserate their distresses and would alleviate them, I do hereby earnestly recommend it to you, that if the ship or vessel, in which the said charitable supplies will be sent to the said islands should by the fortune of war fall into any of your hands, and it shall appear to you, by her authentic papers, that the cargo is *bona fide* composed of such beneficent donations only, and not of merchandise intended to be sold for the profit of the shippers, you would kindly and generously permit the said vessel

to pass to the place of her destination; in doing of which you will not only have the present and lasting satisfaction of having gratified your own humane and pious feelings as men and as Christians, but will undoubtedly recommend yourselves to the favor of God, of the Congress, of your employers, and of your country.

Wishing you success in your cruises, I have the honor to be, gentlemen, etc.,

B. Franklin,
Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States at the Court of France.

DCCCCXLVIII

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 13 February, 1781.

Sir:—I have just received from Congress their letter for the king, which I have the honor of putting herewith into the hands of your Excellency. I am charged, at the same time, to "represent, in the strongest terms, the unalterable resolution of the United States to maintain their liberties and independence; and inviolably to adhere to the alliance at every hazard and in every event; and that the misfortunes of the last campaign, instead of repressing, have redoubled their ardor; that Congress are resolved to employ every resource in their power to expel the enemy from every part of the United States, by the most vigorous and decisive co-operation with marine and other forces of their illustrious ally; that

they have accordingly called on the several States for a powerful army and ample supplies of provisions; and that the States are disposed effectually to comply with their requisitions. That if, in aid of their own exertions, the court of France can be prevailed on to assume a naval superiority in the American seas, to furnish the arms, ammunition, and clothing specified in the estimate heretofore transmitted, and to assist with the loan mentioned in the letter, they flatter themselves that, under the Divine blessing, the war must speedily be terminated with glory and advantage to both nations."

By several letters to me from intelligent persons it appears that the great and expensive exertions of the last year, by which a force was assembled capable of facing the enemy, and which accordingly drew towards New York, and lay long near that city, was rendered ineffectual by the superiority of the enemy at sea; and that their successes in Carolina had been chiefly owing to that superiority, and to the want of the necessary means for furnishing, marching, and paying the expense of troops sufficient to defend that province. The Marquis de Lafayette writes to me that it is impossible to conceive, without seeing it, the distress which the troops have suffered for want of clothing; and the following is a paragraph of a letter from General Washington, which I ought not to keep back from your Excellency, viz.: "I doubt not that you are so fully informed by Congress of our political and military state, that it would be superfluous to trouble you with any thing relative to either. If I were to speak on topics of the kind,

it would be to show that our present situation makes one of two things essential to us—a peace, or the most vigorous aid of our allies, particularly in the article of *money*. Of their disposition to serve us, we cannot doubt; their generosity will do every thing which their means will permit." They had in America great expectations, I know not on what foundation, that a considerable supply of money would be obtained from Spain; but that expectation has failed, and the force of that nation in those seas has been employed to reduce small forts in Florida, without rendering any direct assistance to the United States; and indeed the long delay of that court, in acceding to the treaty of commerce, begins to have the appearance of its not inclining to have any connection with us; so that, for effectual friendship, and for the aid so necessary in the present conjuncture, we can rely on France alone, and in the continuance of the king's goodness towards us.

I am grown old. I feel myself much enfeebled by my late long illness, and it is probable I shall not long have any more concern in these affairs. I therefore take this occasion to express my opinion to your Excellency, that the present conjuncture is critical; that there is some danger lest the Congress should lose its influence over the people, if it is found unable to procure the aids that are wanted; and that the whole system of the new government in America may thereby be shaken; that, if the English are suffered once to recover that country, such an opportunity of effectual separation as the present may not occur again in the course of ages; and that the possession

of those fertile and extensive regions, and that vast sea-coast, will afford them so broad a basis for future greatness, by the rapid growth of their commerce, and breed of seamen and soldiers, as will enable them to become the *terror of Europe*,[1] and to exercise with impunity that insolence which is so natural to their nation, and which will increase enormously with the increase of their power. I am, with great respect, your Excellency's, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCXLIX

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES

Passy, 6 March, 1781.

Sir:—By perusing the enclosed instructions to Colonel Laurens and myself, your Excellency will see the necessity I am under of being importunate for an answer to the application lately made for aids of stores and money.[2] As vessels are about to depart for America, it is of the utmost importance that the Congress should receive advice, by some of them,

[1] At a dinner given in Paris by the late Sir Henry Bulwer a few days after the news reached Europe of the surrender of Lee in 1865, Sir Henry's brother, the late Lord Lytton, confessed to considerable disappointment that the war had terminated without a dismemberment of the Union. He had hoped, he said, that it would have left two or three nations instead of one, for, he added, "by the close of the century you will number near a hundred million, and you will be a *terror to Europe*," using singularly enough the very expression employed here by Franklin in forecasting the danger to the Old World of allowing the colonies to remain dependencies of England.—Editor.

[2] For a history of Colonel John Laurens's mission to France, see *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. IX., pp. 195–249.

of what may or may not be expected. I therefore earnestly entreat your Excellency to communicate to me, as soon as possible, the necessary information. With sincere esteem, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCL

TO FELIX NOGARET

Passy, 8 March, 1781.

Sir:—I received the letter you have done me the honor of writing to me the 2d instant, wherein, after overwhelming me with a flood of compliments, which I can never hope to merit, you request my opinion of your translation of a Latin verse that has been applied to me.[1] If I were, which I really am not,

[1] Alluding to the Latin line, which was first applied to Dr. Franklin by M. Turgot, and of which he is said to have been the author:

M. Nogaret's translation was accompanied by a letter, in which he said:

"Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis."

"Les Français, votre Excellence le sçait, ont fait tous leurs efforts pour traduire ce vers Latin où l'on vous rend justice en si peu de mots. Ils ont paru aussi jaloux de transporter cet éloge dans leur langue, qu'ils le sont de vous posséder. Cependant personne n'a réussi, et je crois qu'on ne réussira pas. Car de ces deux vers, insérés comme des meilleurs dans *L'Almanach des Muses* de l'année dernière:

'Cet homme que tu vois, sublime en tous les temps,
Dérobe aux dieux la foudre et le sceptre aux tyrans;'

le premier est de trop. Le second vers est passable. Il serait bon, si, au lieu de *dérobe*, il y avait *arrache*. Mais ce seul vers ne suffit pas. Le sens n'est pas plein. Il faudrait un nom ou un pronom; et ni l'un ni l'autre n'y peut entrer; autrement le vers n'y serait plus. Aurait-on à peu près l'équivalent du Latin, si l'on disait:

'On l'a vu désarmer les tyrans et les dieux'?

"Puisque le laconisme est nécéssaire, voilà ce que je proposerais au

sufficiently skilled in your excellent language to be a proper judge of its poesy, the supposition of my being the subject must restrain me from giving any opinion on that line, except that it ascribes too much to me, especially in what relates to the tyrant; the Revolution having been the work of many able and brave men, wherein it is sufficient honor for me if I am allowed a small share.

I am much obliged by the favorable sentiments you are pleased to entertain of me; and I shall be glad to see your remarks on Gay's *Fan*, as well as your own poem on the same subject. With regard, I have the honor to be, sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

graveur. Les images du *sceptre* et de la *foudre* disparaissent en apparence dans cette traduction; mais je pense qu'elles n'échappent point aux yeux de la reflexion. *Désarmer* Jupiter, c'est lui ôter sa foudre. *Cœlo* dit beaucoup dans le Latin. *Cieux* ne lie rendrait point. J'y supplée par des êtres. Je ne dis pas que la physique y gagne, mais la poésie n'y perd pas."

In reply to Dr. Franklin's answer, some time afterwards, M. Nogaret said: "Paris est content de la traduction de votre *Eripuit*, et votre portrait fait, come je l'avais prévu, la fortune du graveur."

The following is D'Alembert's translation.

"Tu vois le sage courageux,
Dont l'heureux et mâle génie
Arracha le tonnerre aux dieux,
Et le sceptre à la tyrannie."

Among Dr. Franklin's papers was found the following paraphrastic version from an unknown hand.

"Franklin sut arrêter la foudre dans les airs,
Et c'est le moindre bien qu'il fit à sa patrie;
Au milieu de climats divers,
Où dominait la tyrannie,
Il fit régner les arts, les mœurs, et le génie;
Et voilà le héros que j'offre à l'univers."

It was likewise translated into English by Mr. Elphinston.

"He snatched the bolt from Heaven's avenging hand,
Disarmed and drove the tyrant from the land."

DCCCCLI

TO M. DE RAYNEVAL, SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE

PASSY, 11 March, 1781.

SIR:—I have examined the list of supplies wanted in America, which I received yesterday from you, in order to mark, as desired, what may be most necessary to forward thither. As that list is of old date, and I do not know what part of it may have been already procured by other channels, and I understand by my letters that a new list has been made out, which is given to Colonel Laurens, and, though mentioned to be sent to me also, is not yet come to my hands, I have thought it may be well for the present to order the making of a quantity of soldiers' and officers' clothing, equal to one third part of what has been demanded from page 31 to page 42 inclusive; and to collect and get ready also one third of the other articles mentioned in the said pages, which I have marked with a red line in the margin, the whole to be sent by the first good opportunity.

I think it would be well also to send five thousand more good fusils, with fifty tons of lead, and two hundred thousand flints for fusils. If these could go with the fleet, it would be of great service. More powder is not necessary to be sent at present, as there goes in the *Marquis de Lafayette* the remainder of the two thousand barrels granted last year, and also two hundred tons of saltpetre, which they will make into powder. For the other articles that may be wanted, as Colonel Laurens will come fully instructed,

as well by the list given to him, as from his own observation and experience in the army, and from the information he will receive from General Washington, with whom and the Marquis de Lafayette he was to consult before his departure, I conceive it will be best to wait a little for his arrival.

I return the lists, and, having by some unaccountable accident mislaid and lost the paper you gave me, containing what Count de Vergennes said to me yesterday, I must beg the favor of you to repeat it, and send it by the bearer. I am ashamed to give you this trouble, but I wish to be exact in what I am writing of it to Congress. With the greatest esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 12 March, 1781.

Sir:—I had the honor of receiving on the 13th of last month your Excellency's letter of the 1st of January, together with the instructions of November 28th and December 27th, a copy of those to Colonel Laurens, and the letter to the king. I immediately drew a memorial, enforcing as strongly as I could, the requests that are contained in that letter, and directed by the instructions, and I delivered the same with the letter, which were both well received; but, the ministry being extremely occupied with other weighty affairs, I obtained for some time only general answers, that something would be done for us,

etc., and Mr. Laurens not arriving, I wrote again, and pressed strongly for a decision on the subject, that I might be able to write explicitly by this opportunity what aids the Congress were, or were not, to expect; the regulation of their operations for the campaign depending on the information I should be enabled to give.

Upon this I received a note appointing Saturday last for a meeting with the minister, which I attended punctually. He assured me of the king's good-will to the United States, remarking, however, that, being on the spot, I must be sensible of the great expense France was actually engaged in, and the difficulty of providing for it, which rendered the lending us twenty-five millions at present impracticable. But he informed me that the letter from the Congress, and my memorials, had been under his Majesty's consideration; and observed, as to loans in general, that the sum we wanted to borrow in Europe was large, and that the depreciation of our paper had hurt our credit on this side of the water; adding, also, that the king could not possibly favor a loan for us in his dominions, because it would interfere with, and be a prejudice to, those he was under the necessity of obtaining himself to support the war; but that, to give the States a signal proof of his friendship, his Majesty had resolved to grant them the sum of six millions, not as a loan, but as a free gift. This sum, the minister informed me, was exclusive of the three millions which he had before obtained for me, to pay the Congress drafts for interests, etc., expected in the current year.

He added that as it was understood the clothing, etc., with which our army had been heretofore supplied from France was often of bad quality, and dear, the ministers would themselves take care of the purchase of such articles as should be immediately wanted, and send them over; and it was desired of me to look over the great invoice that had been sent hither last year, and mark out those articles; that, as to the money remaining after such purchases, it was to be drawn for by General Washington, upon M. d'Harvelay, Garde du Trésor Royal, and the bills would be duly honored; but it was desired they might be drawn gradually as the money should be wanted, and as much time given for the payment after sight as conveniently could be, that the payment might be more easy.

I assured the minister that the Congress would be very sensible of this token of his Majesty's continued goodness towards the United States; but remarked that it was not the usage with us for the General to draw, and proposed that it might be our Treasurer who should draw the bills for the remainder; but I was told that it was his Majesty's order. And I afterwards understood, from the Secretary of the Council, that, as the sum was intended for the supply of the army, and could not be so large as we had demanded for general occasions, it was thought best to put it into the General's hands, that it might not get into those of the different boards or committees, who might think themselves under a necessity of diverting it to other purposes. There was no room to dispute on this point, every donor having the

right of qualifying his gifts with such terms as he thinks proper.

I took with me the invoice, and, having examined it, I returned it immediately with a letter, of which a copy is enclosed; and I suppose its contents will be followed, unless Colonel Laurens on his arrival should make any changes. I hope he and Colonel Palfrey are safe, though, as yet, not heard of.[1]

After the discourse relating to the aid was ended, the minister proceeded to inform me that the courts of Petersburg and Vienna had offered their mediation; that the king had answered that it would to him personally be agreeable, but that he could not yet accept it, because he had allies whose concurrence was necessary; and that his Majesty desired I would acquaint the Congress with this offer and answer, and urge their sending such instructions as they may think proper to their plenipotentiary, it being not doubted that they would readily accept the proposed mediation, from their own sense of its being both useful and necessary. I mentioned that I supposed Mr. Adams was already furnished with instructions relating to any treaty of peace that might be proposed.

I must now beg leave to say something relating to myself, a subject with which I have not often troubled the Congress. I have passed my seventy-fifth year, and I find that the long and severe fit of the gout, which I had the last winter, has shaken me

[1] Colonel William Palfrey for some time Paymaster-General of the Continental army, had been appointed Consul-General to France by Congress, but was lost at sea on his passage.

exceedingly, and I am yet far from having recovered the bodily strength I before enjoyed. I do not know that my mental faculties are impaired—perhaps I shall be the last to discover that; but I am sensible of great diminution in my activity, a quality I think particularly necessary in your minister for this court. I am afraid, therefore, that your affairs may some time or other suffer by my deficiency. I find, also, that the business is too heavy for me, and too confining. The constant attendance at home, which is necessary for receiving and accepting your bills of exchange (a matter foreign to my ministerial functions), to answer letters, and perform other parts of my employment, prevents my taking the air and exercise which my annual journeys formerly used to afford me, and which contributed much to the preservation of my health. There are many other little personal attentions which the infirmities of age render necessary to an old man's comfort, even in some degree to the continuance of his existence, and with which business often interferes.

I have been engaged in public affairs, and enjoyed public confidence, in some shape or other, during the long term of fifty years, and honor sufficient to satisfy any reasonable ambition; and I have no other left but that of repose, which I hope the Congress will grant me, by sending some person to supply my place. At the same time, I beg they may be assured that it is not any the least doubt of their success in the glorious cause, nor any disgust received in their service, that induces me to decline it, but purely and simply the reasons above mentioned. And, as I

cannot at present undergo the fatigues of a sea voyage (the last having been almost too much for me), and would not again expose myself to the hazard of capture and imprisonment in this time of war, I propose to remain here at least till the peace; perhaps it may be for the remainder of my life; and, if any knowledge or experience I have acquired here may be thought of use to my successor, I shall freely communicate it, and assist him with any influence I may be supposed to have, or counsel that may be desired of me.[1]

I have one request more to make, which, if I have served the Congress to their satisfaction, I hope they will not refuse me; it is, that they will be pleased to take under their protection my grandson, William Temple Franklin. I have educated him from his infancy, and I brought him over with an intention of placing him where he might be qualified for the profession of the law; but the constant occasion I had for his services as a private secretary during the time of the Commissioners, and more extensively since their departure, has induced me to keep him always with me; and indeed, being continually disappointed of the secretary Congress had at different times intended me, it would have been impossible for me, without this young gentleman's assistance, to have

[1] In a letter to the President of Congress, dated at Madrid, April 25th, 1781, Mr. Jay said: "I perceive Dr. Franklin desires to retire. This circumstance calls upon me to assure Congress, that I have reason to be perfectly satisfied with his conduct towards me, and that I have received from him all the aid and attention I could wish or expect. His character is very high here, and I really believe that the respectability, which he enjoys throughout Europe, has been of general use to our cause and country."

gone through the business incumbent on me. He has therefore lost so much of the time necessary for law studies, that I think it rather advisable for him to continue, if it may be, in the line of public foreign affairs for which he seems qualified by a sagacity and judgment above his years, and great diligence and activity, exact probity, a genteel address, a facility in speaking well the French tongue, and all the knowledge of business to be obtained by a four years' constant employment in the secretary's office, where he may be said to have served a kind of apprenticeship.

After all the allowance I am capable of making for the partiality of a parent to his offspring, I cannot but think he may in time make a very able foreign minister for Congress, in whose service his fidelity may be relied on. But I do not at present propose him as such, for though he is now of age, a few years more of experience will not be amiss. In the meantime, if they should think fit to employ him as a secretary to their minister at any European court, I am persuaded they will have reason to be satisfied with his conduct, and I shall be thankful for his appointment, as a favor to me.

My accounts have been long ready for the examination of some person to be appointed for that purpose. Mr. Johnson having declined it, and Mr. Dana residing at present at Paris, I requested him to undertake it, and to examine at the same time those of Mr. Deane; but he also declines it, as being unacquainted with accounts. If no fresh appointment has been made by Congress, I think of desiring Mr.

Palfrey to perform that service when he arrives, which I hope will be approved, for I am uneasy at the delay. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCLIII

TO THE BOARD OF ADMIRALTY

Passy, 17 March, 1781.

Gentlemen:—I received the honor of yours, dated January the 2d, containing sundry questions relating to the ship *Alliance*, and the expedition under the command of John Paul Jones.

I apprehend that the letters and papers sent by the *Alliance*, if they came to your hands, and those which went in the *Ariel*, taken together, would pretty well inform you on most of the particulars you inquire about; and the deficiencies might be supplied by Captain Jones himself, and others, who were engaged in the expedition. But, as I learn from Colonel Laurens that his arrival was not heard of at Boston the 11th of February, though he sailed the 18th of December, and possibly he may have miscarried, I shall endeavor to answer as well as I can your several queries, and will hereafter send you duplicates of the papers that may be lost.

But I would previously remark, as to the expedition in general, that this court, having, I suppose, some enterprise in view, which Captain Jones, who had signalized his bravery in taking the *Drake*, was thought a proper person to conduct, had soon after

that action requested we would spare him to them, which was the more readily agreed to, as a difference subsisted between him and his lieutenant, which laid us under a difficulty that was by that means got over. Some time passed, however, before any steps were taken to employ him in a manner agreeable to him, and possibly the first project was laid aside, many difficulties attending any attempt of introducing a foreign officer into the French marine, as it disturbs the order of their promotions, etc., and he himself choosing to act rather under the Commission of Congress. However, a project was at length formed of furnishing him with some of the king's ships, the officers of which were to have temporary American commission, which being posterior in date to his commission, would put them naturally under his command for the time; and the final intention, after various changes, was to intercept the Baltic fleet.

The *Alliance* was at that time under orders to carry Mr. Adams back to America; but the Minister of the Marine, by a written letter requesting I would lend her to strengthen the little squadron, and offering a passage for Mr. Adams in one of the king's ships, I consented to the request, hoping that, besides obliging the minister, I might obtain the disposition of some prisoners to exchange for our countrymen in England.

Question 1st. "Whether the ships with which the frigate *Alliance* was concerted in an expedition, of which Captain John Paul Jones had the command, were the property of private persons, and, if so, who were the owners of those ships?"

Answer. The ships with which the *Alliance* was concerted, were, 1st, the *Bonhomme Richard*, bought and fitted by the king, on purpose for Captain Jones; 2dly, the *Pallas*, frigate; 3dly, the *Vengeance*, a corvette; 4thly, the *Cerf*, a cutter; all belonging to the king, and the property of no private person whatever, as far as I have heard or believe.

Two privateers, the *Monsieur* and the *Granville*, were indeed with the little squadron in going out; I suppose to take advantage of the convoy; but, being on their own account, and at their own discretion, the *Monsieur* quitted company on the coast of Ireland, and the *Granville* returned about the same time to France. I have not heard that the *Monsieur* ever claimed any part of the prizes. The *Granville* has made some claim, on account, not only of what were taken while she was with the squadron, but of the whole taken after her departure, on this pretence, that, some prisoners being put on board of her, and losing company, she found herself obliged to go back with them, not having wherewith to maintain them, etc.; but this claim is opposed by the other ships, being regarded as frivolous, as she was not concerted. The claim, however, is not yet decided, but hangs in the courts. These circumstances show that these vessels were not considered as a part of the armament. But it appears more plainly by the *concordat* of the captains, whereof I send you a copy. Who the owners were of those privateers I have not heard. I suppose they may be the inhabitants of Bordeaux and Granville.

Question 2d. "Whether any agreement was made

by you, or any person in your behalf, with the owners of the ships concerted with the *Alliance* in that expedition, respecting the shares they were severally to draw of the prizes which might be taken during said expedition?"

Answer. I never made any such agreement, nor any person in my behalf. I lent the vessel to the king simply at the minister's request, supposing it would be agreeable to Congress to oblige their ally, and that the division, if there should be any thing to divide, would be according to the laws of France, or America, as should be found most equitable. But the captains, before they sailed, entered into an agreement, called the *concordat* above mentioned, to divide according to the rules of America, as they acted under American commissions and colors.

Question 3d. "Whether the *Serapis* and *Scarborough*, and other captures made during said expedition, were divided among the captors, and the distribution made according to the resolutions of Congress, and, if not, what mode was pursued in making the distribution?"

Answer. No division has yet been made of the *Serapis* and *Scarborough*. It is but lately that I have heard of the money being ready for division at L'Orient. I suppose the mode will be that agreed on by the captains.

Question 4th. "What were the net proceeds of the *Serapis*, *Scarborough*, and the other prizes taken during the said expedition?"

Answer. I have not yet heard what were the net proceeds of the prizes, nor have I seen any account.

As soon as such shall come to my hands I will transmit it to you, and will endeavor to obtain it speedily. No satisfaction has yet been obtained for the prizes carried into Norway and delivered up by the King of Denmark.

Question 5th. "What benefit the United States of America have received from the prisoners made during said expedition?"

Answer. I did expect to have had all the prisoners taken by the squadron, to exchange for Americans in consideration of my having lent the *Alliance;* and Captain Pearson engaged in behalf of the British government by a written instrument, that those set on shore in Holland should be considered as prisoners of war to the United States, and exchanged accordingly. But I was, nevertheless, disappointed in this expectation. For, an exchange of all the prisoners being proposed to be made in Holland, it was found necessary at that time by the Dutch government, in order to avoid embroiling their state with England, that those prisoners should be considered as taken by France, and they were accordingly exchanged for Frenchmen, on the footing of the French cartel with England. This I agreed to on the request of the French ambassador at the Hague, and also to avoid the risk of sending them by sea to France (the English cruising with seven ships off the Texel to retake them), and as it would be more convenient and certain for us to have an equal number of English delivered to me by France, at or near Morlaix, to be sent over in the cartel. But the English government afterwards refused, very

unjustly, to give any Americans in exchange for English that had not been taken by Americans. So we did not reap the benefit we hoped for.

Question 6th. "What orders were given to Captain Landais?"

Answer. That he should obey the orders of Captain Jones.

Question 7th. "What was the ground of dispute between Captain Jones and him?"

Answer. That, when at sea together, he refused to obey Captain Jones' orders.

Question 8th. "What were the disbursements on the *Alliance*, from the time of her first arrival in France, until she left that kingdom?"

Answer. The disbursements on the *Alliance*, from the time of her first arrival in France, till the commencement of the cruise under Captain Jones, as appears by the accounts of Mr. Schweighauser, agent appointed by William Lee, amounted to ——, which I paid. The disbursements on her refit in Holland were paid by the king, as were also those on her second refit after her return to L'Orient, as long as she was under the care of Captain Jones. But Captain Landais, when he resumed the command of her, thought fit to take what he wanted of Mr. Schweighauser's agent, to the amount of 31,668 *livres*, 12 *s.* 3*d.*, for which, being contrary to my orders given to Mr. Schweighauser, on his asking them upon the occasion, I refused to pay (my correspondence with him will show you my reasons), and of those paid by the king I have no account.

Question 9th. "Why the *Alliance* lay so long at

Port L'Orient, after her arrival there from the Texel, and in general every information in your power respecting the *Alliance* and the expedition referred to."

Answer. Her lying so long at L'Orient was first occasioned by the mutinous disposition of the officers and men, who refused to raise the anchors till they should receive wages and prize-money. I did not conceive they had a right to demand payment of wages in a foreign country, or anywhere but at the port they came from, no one here knowing on what terms they were engaged, what they had received, or what was due to them. The prize-money I wished them to have; but, as that could not soon be obtained, I thought it wrong in them to detain the vessel on that account; and, as I was informed many of them were in want of necessaries, I advanced twenty-four thousand livres on account, and put it into Captain Jones' hands to relieve and pacify them, that they might go more willingly. But they were encouraged by some meddling passengers to persist. The king would have taken the prizes and paid for them, at the rate *per gun, etc.*, as he pays for warlike vessels taken by his ships; but they raised a clamor at this, it being put into their heads that it was a project for cheating them, and they demanded a sale by auction. The minister, who usually gives more when ships are taken for the king than they will produce by auction, readily consented to this when I asked it of him; but then this method required time to have them inventoried, advertised in different ports, to create a fuller concurrence of buyers, etc. Captain Jones came up to Paris to hasten the

proceedings. In his absence, Captain Landais, by the advise of Mr. Lee and Commodore Gillon, took possession of the ship and kept her long, writing up to Paris, waiting answers, etc.

I have often mentioned to Congress the inconvenience of putting their vessels under the care of persons living perhaps one hundred leagues from the port they arrive at, which necessarily creates delays, and of course enormous expenses; and, for a remedy, I have as often recommended the appointment of consuls, being very sensible of my own insufficiency in maritime affairs, which have taken up a vast deal of my time, and given me abundance of trouble, to the hindrance, sometimes, of more important business. I hope these inconveniences will now be soon removed by the arrival of Mr. Palfrey.

As the ministry had reasons, if some of the first plans had been pursued, to wish the expedition might be understood as American, the instructions were to be given by me, and the outfit was committed to M. de Chaumont, known to be one of our friends, and well acquainted with such affairs. The Marquis de Lafayette, who was to have been concerned in the execution, can probably acquaint you with those reasons. If not, I shall do it hereafter. It afterwards continued in the hands of M. de Chaumont to the end. I never paid or received a farthing directly or indirectly on account of the expedition; and, the captains having made him their trustee and agent, it is to him they are to apply for their proportions of the captures. There may be something, though I believe very little, coming to the United States from

the *Alliance's* share of a small ransom made contrary to orders.

No account has been rendered to me of that ransom, therefore I cannot say how much; but I will inquire about it and inform you hereafter.

Most of the colliers taken were burnt or sunk. The ships of war taken, I understand, belong wholly to the captors. If any particulars remain, on which you desire information, be pleased to mention them. I think it my duty to give you all the satisfaction in my power, and shall do it willingly. Being with great regard, gentlemen, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLIV

TO WILLIAM HODGSON

Passy, 1 April, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I received your respected favor of the 20th past, and am shocked exceedingly at the account you give me of Digges. He that robs the rich even of a single guinea is a villain; but what is he who can break his sacred trust, by robbing a poor man and a prisoner of eighteen pence given in charity for his relief, and repeat that crime as often as there are weeks in a winter, and multiply it by robbing as many poor men every week as make up the number of near six hundred? We have no name in our language for such atrocious wickedness. If such a fellow is not damned, it is not worth while to keep a devil.[1]

[1] Mr. Hodgson had written as follows: "I have just received yours of the 8th instant, which surprises me not a little, as by the letter

I am sorry you have been obliged to advance money. I desired Mr. Grand, some time since, to order two hundred pounds to be paid you in London. If that is not done, draw on him for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, payable at thirty days' sight, and your bill shall be duly honored.

I enclose a copy of Digges' last letter to me, in which he acknowledges the drafts made on me (omitting one of seventy-five pounds), and pretends that he only draws as he is drawn upon by his friends, who

enclosed I perceive the person to whom that letter is addressed has deceived you most egregiously. He has not advanced one shilling that has come to my knowledge. He had indeed written to Portsmouth and Plymouth, to order a distribution of one shilling and six pence a week to the prisoners. I was informed of it by the agents at both places; but, although he gave those directions, he did not provide the necessary funds. I thought it therefore right to caution both Mr. Wren and Mr. Heath against advancing money, and advised them to say, that they should be glad to serve the prisoners, but that it was just that the money should be sent to them; and indeed I have been obliged to reimburse to one of those persons twenty-five pounds, and to the other twenty pounds, which they had before advanced to Mr. Digges, and could not procure the payment of: and this I did, partly out of a bill he gave me last year on Mr. Grand for forty-eight pounds, although twenty pounds of that sum were for money I had lent him in the spring of 1780. I fear all is not right. He has been absent from town some time. The last I heard of him was from Bristol, where he was about purchasing goods for Lisbon."—London, March 20, 1781.

Extract from a letter written by Dr. Franklin to Mr. Jay, dated Passy, August 20, 1781: "Digges, a Maryland merchant, residing in London, who pretended to be a zealous American, and to have much concern for our poor people in the English prisons, drew upon me for their relief at different times last winter to the amount of four hundred and ninety-five pounds sterling, which he said had been drawn for upon him by the gentlemen at Portsmouth and Plymouth, who had the care of the distribution. To my utter astonishment I have since learned that the villain had not applied above thirty pounds of the money to that use, and that he has failed and absconded."

hand the money to the prisoners, and that those friends are almost tired of the charitable employment, but he encourages them, etc. Be so good as to let them know of this letter.

I wish, with you and with all good men, for peace; proposals of mediation have been made, but the effect is yet uncertain. I shall be mindful of your request, and you may depend on my doing any thing in my power that may be serviceable to you. With sincere esteem, I am, dear sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCLV

FROM FRANCIS DANA

HOTEL VALOIS, RUE RICHELIEU, PARIS, 6 April, 1781.

SIR:—Having, agreeably to my instructions as well as my own inclinations, laid before your Excellency all the papers which I have received from Congress relative to my mission for the Court of Russia, and my correspondence with his Excellency the Comte de Vergennes, in consequence of the same, for the benefit of your good counsel; and as you were so kind, at my particular request, as to introduce me to the Comte at the conference we had last Wednesday upon the subject of my mission, and heard the whole, I hope you will not think I give you any unnecessary trouble when I request you to favor me, in writing, with your opinion upon the following matters. Whether, on the whole, you conceive the Comte to have any objections to the mission itself? Or whether you considered his reflections upon the

subject rather intended as cautions and advice to me respecting the conduct he would wish me to hold in the business? Whether you supposed him finally to make any real objections to my going to Russia in the character only of a private American gentleman and there waiting for the favorable moment for opening my eventual character? And whether, all circumstances considered, your Excellency thinks it expedient for me to proceed to St. Petersburg in a private character only, and there to wait as above mentioned?

You will not, I presume, think I mean any thing particular in my request, when I assure you I shall likewise ask of Mr. Adams his opinion, in writing, upon the same subject. Being directed by Congress to consult you and him, I am desirous only to have it in my power, in case of the death of either of you, to show them I have done so, as well as the result itself; and that I have paid, as I shall do, a proper respect and attention to your opinions and advice in the whole of this business.

I am with the greatest respect, etc.,

FRANCIS DANA.

P. S.—I shall set off for Holland on Sunday morning, and shall cheerfully take your commands.

DCCCCLVI

TO FRANCIS DANA

PASSY, 7 April, 1781.

SIR:—I received the letter you yesterday did me the honor of writing to me, requesting my opinion,

in writing, relative to the conference you had with his Excellency, the Count de Vergennes, last Wednesday—I being present; and also as to the expediency of your proceeding to St. Petersburg; which request I willingly comply with, as follows:

Question 1st. "Whether, on the whole, I conceived the Count to have any objections to the mission itself?"

Answer. He did not make any such objections, nor did he drop any expression by which it might be supposed he had any such in his mind.

Question 2d. "Whether I considered his reflections upon the subject to be rather intended as cautions and advice to you, respecting the conduct he wished you to hold in the business?"

Answer. His Excellency expressed his apprehensions that, if you went thither under a public character before the disposition of the court was known and its consent obtained, it might be thought improper, and be attended with inconvenience; and, if I remember right, he intimated the propriety of your consulting the ambassador at the Hague.

Question 3d. "Whether I supposed him finally to make any real objections to your going to St. Petersburg in the character only of a private American gentleman, and there waiting the favorable moment of opening your eventual character?"

Answer. His objections were that, though you should not avow your public character, yet, if known to be an American who had been in public employ, it would be suspected that you had such a character, and the British minister there might exert himself to

procure you "*quelques désagréments*"—that is, chagrins or mortifications; and that unless you appeared to have some other object in visiting St. Petersburg, your being an American would alone give strong grounds for such suspicions. But when you mentioned that you might appear to have views of commerce, as a merchant, or of curiosity, as a traveller, etc.; that there was a gentleman at St. Petersburg with whom some in America had a correspondence, and who had given hints of the utility there might be in having an American in Russia, who could give true intelligence of the state of our affairs, and prevent or refute misrepresentations, etc.; and that you could, perhaps, by means of that gentleman, make acquaintance, and thence procure useful information of the state of commerce, the country, the court, etc., he seemed less to disapprove of your going directly.

As to my own opinion, which you require, though I have long imagined that we let ourselves down in offering our alliance before it is desired, and that it would have been better if we had never issued commissions for ministers to the courts of Spain, Vienna, Prussia, Tuscany, or Holland, till we had first privately learned whether they would be received, since a refusal from one is an actual slight, that lessens our reputation, and makes others less willing to form a connection with us; yet, since your commission is given, and the Congress seem to expect, though I think they do not absolutely require that you should proceed to St. Petersburg immediately, I conceive that (assuming only a private character for the

present, as you propose) it will be right for you to go, unless, on consulting Mr. Adams, you should find reason to judge that, under the present circumstances of the proposed mediation, a delay for some time would be more advisable. With great esteem, and best wishes for your success, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLVII

from John Adams

Leyden, 10 April, 1781.

Sir:—Relying on your virtues and graces of faith and hope, I accepted the bills to the amount of ten thousand pounds sterling drawn in favor of Mr. Tracy. I have received advice from Congress of more bills drawn upon me. When they arrive, and are presented, I must write to you concerning them, and desire you to enable me to discharge them; for I am sorry to say that, although I have opened a loan according to the best plan I could devise, and the plan and the loan seem to be countenanced by the public, yet there is little money obtained, scarcely enough to defray the expense of obligations and stamps; and it is more and more clear to me that we shall never obtain a loan here, until our independence is acknowledged by the States. Till then, every man seems to be afraid that his having any thing to do in it will be made a foundation of a criminal process, or a provocation to the resentment of the mob.

The time is very near when some of the bills I have accepted become payable. I must entreat your Excellency's answer to this as soon as convenient and to point out to me, whether you choose that the house of Fizeau, Grand, & Co., or any other, should pay the money. It is a most grievous mortification to me, to find that America has no credit here, while England certainly still has so much; and to find that no gentlemen in public life here dare return me a visit or answer me a letter, even those who treated me, when I first arrived here, with great politeness. I am entreated, however, to keep this secret, but have no motive to secrete it from you. On the contrary, you ought to know it. I am told that there will be great alterations very soon; but I have seen by experience that no man in this country knows what will be on the morrow.

Let me ask the favor of you, sir, to give my best respects to Colonel Laurens and Mr. Franklin. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, sir, etc., JOHN ADAMS.

DCCCCLVIII

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL

PASSY, 12 April, 1781.

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor by M. Cabarrus, and should have been glad if I could have rendered him any service here. He appears an amiable man, and expert in affairs. I have also your obliging letters of the 28th of February, and the 12th and 30th

of March. I thank you much for your friendly hints of the operations of my enemies, and of the means I might use to defeat them. Having in view at present no other point to gain but that of rest, I do not take their malice so much amiss, as it may further my project, and perhaps be some advantage to you. —— and —— are open, and, so far, honorable enemies; the ——, if enemies, are more covered. I never did any of them the least injury, and can conceive no other source of their malice, but envy. To be sure, the excessive respect shown me here by all ranks of people, and the little notice taken of them, was a mortifying circumstance; but it was what I could neither prevent nor remedy. Those who feel pain at seeing others enjoy pleasure, and are unhappy, must meet daily with so many causes of torment that I conceive them to be already in a state of damnation; and, on that account, I ought to drop all resentment with regard to those two gentlemen. But I cannot help being concerned at the mischief their ill tempers will be continually doing in our public affairs, whenever they have any concern in them.

I remember the maxim you mention of Charles the Fifth, *Yo y el Tiempo;* and have somewhere met with an answer to it in this distich:

> " I and Time 'gainst any two,
> Chance and I 'gainst Time and you."

And I think the gentlemen you have at present to deal with would do wisely to guard a little more against certain chances.

The price of the *Bibliotheca Hispana* is too high for me. I thank you for the *Gazettes* you sent me by the ambassador's courier. I received none by the last. I shall be exceedingly glad to receive the memoirs of the *Sociedad Económica*, and the works on political economy of its founder. The Prince of Maceran, with several other persons of his nation did me the honor of breakfasting with me on Monday last, when I presented the compliments you charged me with. Mr. Cumberland has not yet arrived at Paris, as far as I have heard.

The discontents in our army have been quieted. There was in them not the least disposition of revolting to the enemy. I thank you for the Maryland captain's news, which I hope will be confirmed. They have heard something of it in England, as you will see by the papers, and are very uneasy about it, as well as about their news from the East Indies. Yours affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.[1]

[1] On the 12th of April, 1781, Dr. Franklin was entertained in a somewhat remarkable manner, at a *Fête Champêtre* given by the Countess d'Houdetot, at Sanoy, in the valley of Montmorency, twelve miles from Paris. The company consisted only of the different branches of the family of the Count and Countess d'Houdetot. To understand one of the stanzas, it is necessary to know that the Countess' name was Sophie. When the approach of Dr. Franklin's carriage was announced, they all set off on foot from the château, and met him at the distance of about half a mile. He was handed from his carriage by the Countess who, upon his alighting, pronounced the following verses of her own composition:

"Ame du héros, et du sage,
Oh liberté! premier bienfait des dieux!
Hélas! c'est de trop loin que nous t'offrons des vœux;
Ce n'est qu'en soupirant que nous rendons hommage
Au mortel qui forma des citoyens heureux."

They walked slowly to the château, where they sat down to a splendid dinner. At the first glass of wine, the following stanza was

DCCCCLIX

TO JOHN ADAMS

PASSY, 29 April, 1781.

I enclose you extracts of two letters ministerial, found in the same packet with the former, written in

sung, which became the chorus of the day, accompanied by instrumental music:

"De Benjamin célébrons la mémoire,
Chantons-le bien qu'il a fait aux mortels;
En Amérique il aura des autels,
Et dans Sanoy nous buvons à sa gloire."

At the second glass, the Countess sang the following quatrain:

"Il rend ses droits à l'humaine nature,
Pour l'affranchir il voulut l'éclairer,
Et la vertu, pour se faire adorer,
De Benjamin emprunta la figure."

At the third glass, the Viscount d'Houdetot sang:

"Guillaume Tell fut brave, mais sauvage;
J'estime plus notre cher Benjamin;
De l'Amérique en fixant le destin,
A table il rit, et c'est là le vrai sage."

At the fourth, the Viscountess sang:

"Je dis aussi, vive Philadelphie!
L'indépendance a de quoi me tenter;
Dans ce pays je voudrais habiter,
Quoiqu'il n'y ait ni bal ni comédie."

At the fifth, Madame de Pernan:

"Tous nos enfants apprendront de leurs mères
A vous aimer, vous croire et vous bénir;
Vous enseignez ce qui peut réunir
Tous les humains dans les bras d'un seul père."

At the sixth, Count de Tressan:

"Vive Sanoy! C'est ma Philadelphie
Lorsque j'y vois son cher législateur;
J'y rajeunis dans le sein du bonheur,
J'y ris, j'y pois, et j'écoute Sophie."

At the seventh, the Count d'Apché:

the fond belief that the States were on the point of submitting, and cautioning the commissioners for peace not to promise too much respecting the future

"Pour soutenir cette charte sacrée
Qu'Edouard accorda aux Anglais,
Je sens qu'il n'est de chevalier Français
Qui ne désire employer son épée."

Dinner being ended, Dr. Franklin was led by the Countess, accompanied by the whole family, into the gardens of Sanoy, where, under a rural arbor, he was presented by the gardener with a Virginia locust tree, which, at the request of the company, he planted with his own hands. The Countess at the same time repeated the following verses, which have been engraven on a marble pillar in the neighborhood of that tree.

"Arbre sacré, durable monument
Du séjour qu'en ces lieux a daigné faire un sage,
De ces jardins devenu l'ornement,
Recevez-y le juste hommage
De nos vœux et de notre encens;
Et puissiez-vous dans tous les âges,
A jamais respecté du temps,
Vivre autant que son nom, ses lois et ses ouvrages."

On their return, they were met by a band of music, which accompanied the whole family in the following song:

"Que cet arbre, blanté par sa main bienfaisante,
Élevant sa tige naissante
Au dessus du stérile ormeau,
Par sa fleur odoriférante,
Parfume l'air de cet heureux hameau.
La foudre ne pourra l'atteindre,
Elle respectera son faite et ses rameaux;
Franklin nous enseigna par ses heureux travaux
A la diriger ou à l'eteindre,
Tandis qu'il détruisait des maux
Pour la terre encore plus à plaindre."

After which they all proceeded to the château. Towards evening Dr. Franklin was reconducted by the whole company to his carriage, and, before the door was shut, the Countess pronounced the following complimentary verses composed by herself:

"Législateur d'un mode, et bienfaiteur des deux,
L'homme dans tous les temps te devra ses hommages;
Et je m'acquitte dans ces lieux
De la dette de tous les âges."

constitutions. They are indeed cautiously worded, but easily understood, when explained by two court maxims or assertions, the one of Lord Granville's, late President of the Council, that *the king is the legislator of the colonies;* the other of the present Chancellor, when in the House of Commons, that *the Quebec constitution was the only proper constitution for colonies, ought to have been given to them all when first planted, and what all ought now to be reduced to.* We may hence see the danger of listening to any of their deceitful propositions, though piqued by the negligence of some of those European powers, who will be much benefited by our revolution. I have honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most the humble servant, B. Franklin.

DCCCCLX

TO THE MARQUIS TURGOT

Passy, 1 May, 1781.

Sir:—I did intend, when in London, to have published a pamphlet describing the new stove you mention, and for that purpose had a plate engraved, of which I send you an impression. But I have since been too much engaged in affairs to execute that intention. Its principle is that of a siphon reversed, operating on air in a manner somewhat similar to the operation of the common siphon on water. The funnel of the chimney is the longer leg, the vase is the shorter; and as in the common siphon the weight of water in the longer leg is greater than that in the

shorter leg, and thus in descending permits the water in the shorter leg to rise by the pressure of the atmosphere; so in this aërial siphon the levity of the air in the longer leg being greater than that in the shorter, it rises and permits the pressure of the atmosphere to force that in the shorter to descend. This causes the smoke to descend also, and in passing through burning coals it is kindled into flame, thereby heating more the passages in the iron box whereon the vase which contains the coals is placed, and retarding at the same time the consumption of the coals.

On the left hand of the engraving you see the machine put together and placed in a niche built for it in a common chimney. On the right hand the parts (except the vase) are shown separately. If you should desire a more particular explanation I will give it to you *vivâ voce* whenever you please. I think with you that it is capable of being used to advantage in our kitchens, if one could overcome the repugnance of cooks to the using of new instruments and new methods. With great respect,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXI

TO CHARLES F. DUMAS

Passy, 4 May, 1781.

Dear Sir:—It is so long since I heard from you, that I begin to fear you are ill. Pray write to me, and let me know the state of your health. I enclose Morgan's account of his engagement with Tarleton.

If he has not already received it, it may be agreeable to our friend the gazetteer of Leyden. Every thing goes well here, and I am ever, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXII

FROM MISS GEORGIANA SHIPLEY

London, 6 May, 1781.

Your dear, delightful letter made me most happy, particularly your account of yourself, as it proves that you are in good spirits, and pleased with your present situation. Your "Dialogue with the Gout" is written with your own cheerful pleasantry, and "La belle et la mauvaise Jambe" recalls to my mind those happy hours we once passed in your society, where we were never amused without learning some useful truth, and where I first acquired a taste *pour la conversation badinante et réfléchie.*

It is long since I have written to my ever valued friend; but the difficulty I find in conveying my letters safe to Passy is the only motive for my silence. Strange, that I should be under the necessity of concealing from the world a correspondence which it is the pride and glory of my heart to maintain.

We have spent three months in London, but leave it to-morrow, that we may enjoy the beauties of a late spring at Twyford. My father grows every year fonder of that peaceful retirement; having found his endeavors to serve his country ineffectual, he yields to a torrent which it is no longer in his power

to control. I will confess that although I love reading and drawing sufficiently never to want amusement in the country, yet I have some few friends in town from whom I shall part with regret. We live very little in public, but a great deal with small private societies. They are the charm of life.

I have inquired after Mr. Small, but hitherto my inquiries have proved unsuccessful. Sir John Pringle has left London, and is gone to reside wholly in Scotland. I fear he is much straitened in his circumstances; he looks ill, and is vastly changed from what you remember him. Dr. Priestley is now on a short visit to his friends in town. I find he is settled much to his satisfaction at Birmingham, where he has the care of a pretty numerous congregation. Good Dr. Price calls on us often, and gives us hopes of a visit to Twyford. We value him no less on his own account, than for his steady attachment to our respectable friend.

The first opportunity we have of sending a parcel to Paris, you may expect *all* our shades. You flatter us vastly by desiring them, as well as by every expression of esteem and affection for a family who know how to value *your* praise. Mr. Jones has undertaken the care of this letter. I feel grateful to him for giving me an opportunity of assuring you how much I *do* and ever *shall* continue to love you.

GEORGIANA SHIPLEY.

DCCCCLXIII

TO COURT DE GEBELIN, PARIS [1]

Passy, 7 May, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I am glad the little book [2] proved acceptable. It does not appear to me intended for a grammar to teach the language. It is rather what we call in English a *spelling book*, in which the only method observed is to arrange the words according to their number of syllables, placing those of one syllable together, then those of two syllables, and so on. And it is to be observed that *Sa ki ma*, for instance, is not three words, but one word of three syllables; and the reason that *hyphens* are not placed between the syllables is that the printer had not enough of them.

As the Indians had no letters, they had no orthography. The Delaware language being differently spelt from the Virginian may not always arise from a difference in the language, for strangers who learn the language of an Indian nation, finding no orthography, are at liberty in writing the language to use

[1] Antoine Court de Gebelin, born at Nismes, in 1725, of a Protestant family, became a minister in that communion, first in the Cevennes, and next at Lausanne, which, however, he quitted, together with the clerical function, for the profession of letters at Paris, where he acquired considerable reputation as an antiquary and philologist, and was appointed to superintend one of the museums. He lost much of his popularity, however, by his enthusiastic championship of animal magnetism. He died at Paris, May 13, 1784. His great work is entitled *Monde Primitif, analysé et comparé avec le Monde Moderne*, nine volumes in quarto. On quitting Switzerland he gave to his sister the principal part of his patrimony, reserving little for himself, and depending for a maintenance upon the exercise of his talents.

[2] A vocabulary of the languages of one of the Indian tribe of North America.

such compositions of letters as they think will best produce the sounds of the words. I have observed that our Europeans of different nations, who learn the same Indian language, form each his own orthography according to the usual sounds given to the letters in his own language. Thus the same words of the Mohawk language written by an English, a French, and a German interpreter, often differ very much in the spelling; and, without knowing the usual powers of the letters in the language of the interpreter, one cannot come at the pronunciation of the Indian words. The spelling book in question was, I think, written by a German.

You mention a Virginian Bible. Is it not the Bible of the Massachusetts language, translated by Eliot, and printed in New England about the middle of the last century? I know this Bible, but have never heard of the one in the Virginian language. Your observations of the similitude between many of the words, and those of the ancient world, are indeed very curious.

This inscription, which you find to be Phœnician, is, I think, near *Taunton* (not Janston as you write it). There is some account of it in the old *Philosophical Transactions*. I have never been at the place, but shall be glad to see your remarks on it.

The compass appears to have been long known in China, before it was known in Europe; unless we suppose it known to Homer, who makes the prince that lent ships to Ulysses boast that they had a *spirit* in them, by whose directions they could find their way in a cloudy day, or the darkest night. If any

Phœnicians arrived in America, I should rather think it was not by the accident of a storm, but in the course of their long and adventurous voyages; and that they coasted from Denmark and Norway, over to Greenland, and down southward by Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, etc., to New England; as the Danes themselves certainly did some ages before Columbus.

Our new American Society will be happy in the correspondence you mention, and when it is possible for me I, shall be glad to attend the meetings of your Society [1] which, I am sure, must be very instructive. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXIV

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Passy, 14 May, 1781.

Dear Sir:—You are a very good correspondent, which I do not deserve, as I am a bad one. The truth is, I have too much business upon my hands, a great deal of it foreign to my function as a minister, which interferes with my writing regularly to my friends. But I am, nevertheless, extremely sensible of your kindness in sending me such frequent and full intelligence of the state of affairs on your side of the water, and in letting me see by your letters that your health continues, as well as your zeal for our cause and country.

[1] L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres.

I hope that by this time the ship which has the honor of bearing your name is safely arrived. She carries clothing for nearly twenty thousand men, with arms, ammunition, etc., which will supply some of your wants; and Colonel Laurens will bring a considerable addition, if Providence favors his passage. You will receive from him the particulars, which makes my writing more fully by him unnecessary.

You mention my having enemies in America. You are luckier, for I think you have none here, nor anywhere. Your friends have heard of your being gone against the traitor Arnold, and are anxious to hear of your success, and that you have brought him to punishment. Enclosed is a copy of a letter from his agent in England, captured by one of our cruisers, and by which the price or reward he received for his treachery may be guessed at. Judas sold only one man, Arnold three millions. Judas got for his one man thirty pieces of silver, Arnold not a halfpenny a head. A miserable bargain! especially when one considers the quantity of infamy he has acquired to himself and entailed on his family.[1]

The English are in a fair way of gaining still more enemies; they play a desperate game. Fortune may favor them, as it sometimes does a drunken dicer; but by their tyranny in the East, they have at length roused the powers there against them, and I do not

[1] The letter here referred to was from a banker in London to General Arnold, stating that he had received from him bills to the amount of five thousand pounds sterling, which the banker said he had invested in the stocks. This was supposed to be the money paid to Arnold as the reward of his treachery. After the war, a pension was likewise granted to each of his children. The banker's letter will be found on page 414.—Editor.

know that they have in the West a single friend. If they lose their India commerce (which is one of their present great supports), and one battle at sea, their credit is gone, and their power follows. Thus empires, by pride, folly, and extravagance, ruin themselves like individuals. M. de la Motte-Piquet has snatched from between their teeth a good deal of their West India prey, having taken twenty-two sail of their homeward-bound prizes. One of our American privateers has taken two more, and brought them into Brest, and two were burnt; there were thirty-four in company, with two men-of-war of the line and two frigates, who saved themselves by flight, but we do not hear of their being yet got in.

I think it was a wise measure to send Colonel Laurens here, who could speak knowingly of the state of the army. It has been attended with all the success that perhaps could reasonably be expected, though not with all that was wished. He has fully justified your character of him, and returns thoroughly possessed of my esteem; but that cannot and ought not to please him so much as a little more money would have done for his beloved army. This court continues firm and steady in its friendship, and does every thing it can for us. Can we not do a little more for ourselves? My successor (for I have desired the Congress to send me one) will find it in the best disposition towards us, and I hope he will take care to cultivate that disposition. You, who know the leading people of both countries, can perhaps judge better than any member of Congress of a person suitable for this station.

I wish you may be in a way to give your advice when the matter is agitated in that assembly. I have been long tired of the trade of minister, and wished for a little repose before I went to sleep for good and all. I thought I might have held out till the peace; but, as that seems at a greater distance than the end of my days, I grow impatient. I would not, however, quit the service of the public, if I did not sincerely think that it would be easy for the Congress, with your counsel, to find a fitter man. God bless you, and crown all your labors with success. With the highest regard and most sincere affection, I am, dear sir, etc.,

B. Franklin.

FROM GEN'L ARNOLD'S AGENT IN LONDON [1]

Parliament Street, 30 January, 1781.

Sir:—I am honored with your several letters enclosing bills on Harley & Drummond, to amount of £5,000, the receipt of which I have regularly by packet acknowledged. On the day they were paid I invested the amount in the fund you mentioned, and it was a very favorable time. I flatter myself it will meet your approbation, also the mode in which it was done.

As it is possible some directions might come from you for disposing of the money in some other mode, I thought it might not be so advantageous to lock it up totally, as it might be a long while before I could

[1] Endorsed: "Letter from Arnold's agent, which shows the amount of his bribe." This is the letter referred to in Franklin's letter to Lafayette. *Supra* page 412.

receive a power from you to transfer, had I put it in your name, and in the meantime the dividends could not be received for your use. The mode I have adopted has been used in like cases, and can be instantly altered to any you direct, on your favoring me with a letter.

The account is as follows, viz.:

Bought of Samuel and William Scholey, stock brokers, for Major General Arnold, £7,000, stock in new 4 p. cents at 71 1-4 as follows:

In the name of Major General Benedict Arnold		
£100 stock at 71 1-4 new 4 p. cents consols	Paid £4,987 10	
£6,900 stock at 71 1-4- " " "		
In name of James Meyrick, Esqr.		
Commission paid the brokers	8 15	
Power of attorney to receive dividends . .	1 6	
	£4,996 6 6	

There remains therefore £3 13 6 of the £5,000.

Thus, by this method, if I receive any instructions from you for employing your money in a different manner, I can sell out the £6,900 stock and dispose of your money agreeable to your directions before this letter reaches you, and if it is your wish that it should remain in the fund, it can be placed under your [incomplete].

ARNOLD'S PLOT

PHILADELPHIA, 12 October, 1780.

. . . The late providential discovery of *Arnold's Plot*, which appears to have been a consider-

able time in agitation, has induced a belief that Rodney had something further in view than merely counteracting the design of the Comte de Guichen.

In a controversy and revolution such as this, where former friendships and intimacies subsisted between the contending parties, and where men of upright intentions took different sides, and men of all characters were engaged in the contest, it would not have been strange nor uncommon if conspiracies had been formed; but to the honor of the American army ARNOLD is the first, and it is believed the only American officer who has during this war entered into a conspiracy to betray his country. You know the character of the man: he was brave but avaricious, fond of parade, and not very scrupulous about the means of acquiring money to defray the expenses of it. He had married a young woman who had been distinguished by General Howe's *Meschianzi knights*, and her father was not remarkable for his attachment to the American cause. The expensive manner in which he (Arnold) lived in Philadelphia reduced his finances, and the accounts he exhibited against the public underwent a scrutiny at the Board of Treasury, not much to the advantage of his *honor* and *honesty;* which, joined to his disappointment in the case of the *Active* and the result of the courts-martial instituted on the complaint of the Council of Pennsylvania, soured his temper and rendered him a fit object for Clinton's views. By letters found among his private papers, it appears that Captain André, one of Sir H. Clinton's aides, had commenced a correspondence with Mrs. Arnold

in 1779, under pretence of supplying her with millinery. Whether it was continued till it was ripened into the plot of betraying West Point into the hands of the enemy, I will not undertake to say; but that the scheme had been some time in agitation appears evident from this: that while the enemy were making preparation for executing their purpose, and giving out that their design was against Virginia, the same reports were circulated in Lord Cornwallis' camp in South Carolina, and measures were taken to make us believe he meant to second the expedition, by marching through North Carolina and forming a junction with Sir Henry on his arrival in Virginia. At this time Rodney arrived at New York, and it is conjectured the design was, as soon as they had gained possession of West Point and cut off the communication between the Western and Southern States, to turn their whole force against the French fleet at Rhode Island. This, it is true, is but conjecture, but it must be confessed the object was great, and had Rodney succeeded, he would have finished the year with as much *éclat* as he began it. The providential discovery of the plot, blasted the scheme of our enemies.

The following specimen of American poetry well describes the popular feeling on the occasion:

ON GENERAL ARNOLD

At freedom's call, see Arnold take the field,
With honor blazon'd on his patriot shield;
His gallant feats a dazzling lustre spread;
And circling glories beam'd around his head.

His well-earned praises were consigned to fame;
And fate decreed him an immortal name,
But when, estrang'd from freedom's glorious cause,
Neglecting honor and its sacred laws,
Impell'd by motives of the basest kind,
Which mark the vicious, mean, degen'rate mind,
To virtue lost, and callous to disgrace,
The traitor hiding with the hero's face,
His canker'd heart to sordid views a slave,
To mammon yielding all that freedom gave,
Enleagu'd with friends of that detested tribe,
Whose god is gold, whose savior is a bribe,
Could basely join, his country to betray,
And thus restore a ruthless tyrant's sway,
On freedom's sons impose the galling yoke,
And crush each foe to vice beneath the stroke;
Not all his laurels in the field obtain'd,
Not that which Philip's son by conquest gain'd,
Not all that once adorn'd great Cæsar's brow,
Nor all that Washington may challenge now,
Could save a wretch, whom crimes like these debase,
So far beneath the rank of human race.
But stung with keen remorse, his guilty soul
In vain shall seek repose from pole to pole;
Perpetual anguish shall torment his breast,
And hellish demons haunt his troubled rest;
Not even death shall shield his hated name,
For still the caitiff shall survive to fame,
By fate's decree, who thus pronounc'd his lot:
"Too bad to die, too base to be forgot;
Thy crimes succeeding ages shall proclaim,
And Judas be forgot in Arnold's name."

DCCCCLXV

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 14 May, 1781.

Sir:—I did myself the honor of writing to your Excellency pretty fully on the 12th of March, to which I beg leave to refer. Colonel Laurens arriving soon after, we renewed the application for more money.

His indefatigable endeavors have brought the good dispositions of this court to a more speedy determination of making an addition, than could well have been expected so soon after the former grant. As he will have an opportunity of acquainting you personally with all the particulars of importance, a circumstantial account of the transaction from me is unnecessary. I would only mention that, as it is the practice here to consider early in the year the probable expenses of the campaign, and appropriate the revenues to the several necessary services, all subsequent and unexpected demands are extremely inconvenient and disagreeable, as they cannot be answered without difficulty, occasion much embarrassment, and are sometimes impracticable. If, therefore, the Congress have not on this occasion obtained all they wished, they will impute it to the right cause, and not suppose a want of good-will in our friends, who indeed are such, most firmly and sincerely.

The whole supply for the current year now amounts to twenty millions; but out of this are to be paid your usual drafts for interest money, those in favor of M. de Beaumarchais, and those heretofore drawn on Mr.

Jay and Mr. Laurens, which I have already either paid or engaged for, with the support of your several ministers, etc., etc.; which I mention, that the Congress may avoid embarrassing my successor with drafts, which perhaps he may not have the means in his hands of honoring. Besides paying the second years' salaries of Messrs. Adams and Dana, Jay and Carmichael, I have furnished Mr. Dana with fifteen hundred pounds sterling credit on St. Petersburg, for which place I suppose he is now on his way.

You will receive from Holland advices of the late declaration of that court, with regard to the English refusal of its mediation, and of the assistance requested by the States-General. I hope Mr. Dana will find it well disposed towards us.

I have received no answer yet to my letters relating to the proposed mode of lodging funds here, by supplying the French fleet and army. Having as yet heard nothing of Colonel Palfrey, and it being now more than four months since he sailed, there is great reason to fear he may be lost. If that should unhappily be the case, the Congress cannot too soon appoint another consul, such an officer being really necessary here. Your Minister Plenipotentiary has hitherto had all that sort of business upon his hands; and, as I do not now speak for myself, I may speak more freely. I think he should be freed from the burden of such affairs, from all concerns in making contracts for furnishing supplies, and from all your bill of exchange business, etc., etc., that he may be more at liberty to attend to the duties of his political function.

The prisoners in England are increasing by the late practice of sending our people from New York, and the refusal of the English admiralty to exchange any Americans for Englishmen not taken by American armed vessels. I would mention it for the consideration of Congress, whether it may not be well to set apart five or six hundred English prisoners, and refuse them all exchange in America, but for our countrymen now confined in England.

Agreeably to the vote of Congress, and your Excellency's letter of the 4th of January, I have requested the assistance of this court for obtaining the release of Mr. President Laurens. It does not yet appear that the thing is practicable. What the present situation is of that unfortunate gentleman, may be gathered from the enclosed letters.[1]

I hope the *Alliance*, with the ship *Marquis de Lafayette* under her convoy, is by this time arrived, as they sailed the 27th of March. I flatter myself that the supplies of clothing, etc., which they carry, will be found good of the kind, and well bought. I have by several late opportunities sent copies of the government letters taken in the New York packet. Your Excellency will see that they are written in the perfect persuasion of our submitting speedily, and that the Commissioners are cautioned not to promise too much, with regard to the future constitutions to be given us, as many changes of the old may be necessary, etc. One cannot read those letters from the American Secretary of State, and his

[1] The reference here is to the letters of Sir Grey Cooper, and Mr. Charles Vernon. See Letters, *Supra*, Nov. 20, and Nov. 27, 1780.

under-secretary, Knox, without a variety of reflections of the state we should necessarily be in, if obliged to make the submission they so fondly hope for, but which I trust in God they will never see. Their affairs in the East Indies, by the late accounts, grow worse and worse; and twenty-two ships of the prey they made in the West are wrenched out of their jaws by the squadron of M. de la Motte-Piquet.

I mentioned in a former letter, my purpose of remaining here for some time after I should be superseded. I mean it with the permission of Congress, and on the supposition of no orders being sent me to the contrary; and I hope it will be so understood. With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXVI

TO SAMUEL COOPER

Passy, 15 May, 1781.

Dear Sir:—I received your kind letter of February 1st, by Colonel Johonnot. Your sentiments of the present state of our affairs appear to me very judicious, and I am much obliged by your free communication of them. They are often of use here; for you have a name and character among us that give weight to your opinions.

It gives me great pleasure to learn that your new constitution is at length settled with so great a degree of unanimity and general satisfaction. It seems to me, upon the whole, an excellent one; and that if

there are some particulars that one might have wished a little different, they are such as could not in the present state of things have been well obtained otherwise than they are, and, if by experience found inconvenient, will probably be changed hereafter. I would only mention at present one article, that of maintenance for the clergy. It seems to me that, by the constitution, the Quakers may be obliged to pay the tax for that purpose. But, as the great end in imposing it is professedly the promotion of piety, religion, and morality, and those people have found means of securing that end among themselves without a regular clergy, and their teachers are not allowed to receive money, I should think it not right to tax them, and give the money to the teacher of the parish; but I imagine that, in the laws to be made for levying parish taxes, this matter may be regulated to their contentment.

I am very sensible of the honor done me by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, in choosing me one of their members. I wish I could be of some utility in promoting the noble design of their institution. Perhaps I may, by sending them from time to time some of the best publications that appear here. I shall begin to make a collection for them.

Your excellent sermon gave me abundance of pleasure, and is much admired by several of my friends who understand English. I propose to get it translated and printed at Geneva, at the end of a translation of your new constitution. Nothing could be happier than your choice of a text, and your application of it. It was not necessary in New England,

where everybody reads the Bible, and is acquainted with Scripture phrases, that you should note the texts from which you took them; but I have observed in England, as well as in France, that verses and expressions taken from the sacred writings, and not known to be such, appear very strange and awkward to some readers; and I shall therefore, in my edition, take the liberty of marking the quoted texts in the margin.

I know not whether a *belly-full* has been given to anybody by the picking of *my bones*, but picked they now are, and I think it time they should be *at rest*. I am taking measures to obtain that rest for them; happy if, before I die, I can find a few days absolutely at my own disposal. I often form pleasing imaginations of the pleasure I should enjoy as a private person among my friends and compatriots in my native Boston. God only knows whether this pleasure is reserved for me. With the greatest and most sincere esteem, I am, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXVII

TO FRANCIS LEWIS

Passy, 16 May, 1781.

Sir:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 1st of January. The bill for four thousand four hundred and forty-four Mexican dollars, which you remitted to Mr. Schweighauser, being refused payment by Mr. Jay, for want of a regular endorsement by Mr. Laurens, in whose favor it

was drawn, and which endorsement could not now be obtained, Mr. Schweighauser applied to me, informing me that he should not send the things ordered by your Board, unless the bill was paid; and it appearing on the face of the bill that it was drawn for public service, I concluded to take it up, on which he has purchased the things and shipped them. Colonel Laurens has put on board some other supplies for the army, and I suppose the vessel will now sail directly.

The drafts from Congress upon me for various services, and those on Mr. Jay and Mr. Laurens, all coming upon me for payment, together with the expenses on the ships, etc., etc., have made it impracticable for me to advance more for loading the *Active;* but as we have obtained lately promises of a considerable aid for this year, I shall now try what I can do, as the money comes in, towards supplying what is demanded in the invoice you mention. You will receive, I hope, twenty-eight cannon, and a large quantity of powder and saltpetre, by the ship *Marquis de Lafayette.* I have, by several opportunities, written in answer to your questions relative to the ship *Alliance.* I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

P S.—Please to present my respects to the Board.

DCCCCLXVIII

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 19 May, 1781.

Sir:—I have with you no doubt that America will be easily able to pay off not only the interest, but the

principal, of all the debt she may contract in this war. But whether duties upon her exports will be the best method of doing it, is a question I am not so clear in. England raised indeed a great revenue by duties on tobacco. But it was by virtue of a prohibition of foreign tobaccos, and thereby obliging the internal consumer to pay those duties. If America were to lay a duty of five pence sterling a pound on the exportation of her tobacco, would any European nation buy it? Would not the colonies of Spain and Portugal, and the Ukraine of Russia furnish it much cheaper? Was not England herself obliged, for such reasons, to drop the duty on tobacco she furnished to France? Would it not cost an immense sum in officers, etc., to guard our long coast against smuggling of tobacco, and running it out to avoid a duty? And would not many even of those officers be corrupted and connive at it? It is possibly an erroneous opinion, but I find myself rather inclined to adopt that modern one, which supposes it best for every country to leave its trade entirely free from all incumbrances. Perhaps no country does this at present. Holland comes the nearest to it; and her commercial wealth seems to have increased in proportion.

Your Excellency has done me the honor of announcing to me your appointment. I hope soon to return the compliment by informing you of my demission. I find the various employments of merchant, banker, judge of admiralty, consul, etc., etc., besides my ministerial function, too multifarious and too heavy for my old shoulders; and have therefore

requested Congress that I may be relieved; for in this point I agree even with my enemies, that another may easily be found who can better execute them.

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXIX

from count de vergennes

Versailles, 8 June, 1781.

Sir:—I have received the letter you did me the honor to write me on the 4th instant. I do not know whether Mr. Laurens has purchased the clothing in Holland on account of Congress; I only know (and you were likewise informed of it at the same time) that this officer was *to employ for his purchases in France* part of the six millions which the king has granted to Congress, and that the residue of this sum was intended to be sent to America, with a view of re-establishing the credit of the United States.

If Mr. Laurens, instead of paying ready money in Holland, has contented himself with giving bills on you, I have no concern in it, and the king can furnish no means for your reimbursement.

As to the moneys arising from the loan opened in Holland, we have no pretensions to regulate the employment of them, as they belong to the United States. You must, therefore, sir, apply to Congress for the power of disposing of them, in discharge of the drafts drawn on you from all quarters. I have the honor to be, etc.,

De Vergennes.

DCCCCLXX

TO MESSRS. D. WENDORP AND THOMAS HOPE HEYHGER

PASSY, 8 June, 1781.

GENTLEMEN:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 31st past, relating to your ship, supposed to be retaken from the English by an American privateer, and carried into Morlaix. I apprehend that you have been misinformed, as I do not know of any American privateer at present in these seas. I have the same sentiments with you of the injustice of the English, in their treatment of your nation. They seem at present to have renounced all pretension to any other honor than that of being the first piratical state in the world. There are three employments which I wish the law of nations would protect, so that they should never be molested or interrupted by enemies even in time of war: I mean farmers, fishermen, and merchants; because their employments are not only innocent, but for the common subsistence and benefit of the human species in general. As men grow more enlightened, we may hope that this will in time be the case. Till then we must submit, as well as we can, to the evils we cannot remedy. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCLXXI

FROM JOHN LAURENS [1]

At Sea, 9 June, 1781.

Dear Sir:—On the 1st instant we had a faint breeze that just served to bring us to sea, where we have been languishing in calms and buffeting against contrary winds, which at one time were so violent as to oblige us to lie to till yesterday morning, when a favorable change took place, and enabled us to enter the ocean at a convenient distance from Cape Ortegal. As we are parting with the *Engageante*, which has accompanied us thus far, and returns to Coruña to convoy a part of the French West India trade, I snatch a moment to pay my last respects to your Excellency, and to mention a matter which has occurred to me since my being on board.

I have frequently reflected upon the mention which you have made of retiring from your present important station, and have never varied the opinion which I took the liberty of giving you once at the Count de Vergennes', namely, that the best

[1] This was the son of Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, who assisted in negotiating the peace of 1783. In the winter of 1780 he was sent out to Paris by Congress as a special envoy to solicit relief for the immediate and pressing needs of the army. He was then only twenty-five years of age. He sailed from Boston in February, 1781, and arrived in Paris on the 19th of March following. He had scarcely the maturity and experience for the mission he had undertaken, and was not long in discovering it. He returned to his country after an absence of little less than three months. He rejoined the army, was present at the siege of Yorktown, and subsequently joined the Southern army under General Greene, and while leading an advanced party against some British marauders received a wound which terminated his life on the 27th of August, 1782, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. He was a gifted man and a national loss.

arrangement would be to give your Excellency an active, intelligent Secretary of the Embassy, who might relieve you from the drudgery of office, and that your country should not be deprived of the advantages of your wisdom and influence. The difficulty hitherto has been to find a person properly qualified. The advantages which your grandson derives from his knowledge of the language and manners of the people, and his having been so long in your office and with your Excellency, are very great. The prejudices which have been entertained against him may be removed by a personal introduction to Congress, especially if it is combined with rendering a popular service. I take the liberty of proposing to your Excellency, therefore, if you can spare Mr. Franklin for the purpose, to commit to his care the second remittance of money, and to hasten his departure with that and such of the public supplies of clothing as may be ready to accompany it. I am persuaded that, in public bodies, the want of a personal acquaintance is a great objection to appointing a man to any important office.

The *Engageante's* boat demands my letter. I have written in the greatest haste upon a subject which I hope you will turn to public utility. I renew my sincerest and tenderest wishes for your health and prosperity. I entreat a continuance of the friendship with which you have honored me, and am, with the greatest veneration, etc., JOHN LAURENS.[1]

[1] On the subject of the above letter, Mr. Jay wrote to the President of Congress from Madrid, as follows, April 21, 1781:

"By the letter from Doctor Franklin, herein enclosed, and which he

DCCCCLXXII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Passy, 11 June, 1781.

Sir:—I have lately done myself the honor of writing largely to your Excellency by divers conveyances, to which I beg leave to refer. This is chiefly to

was so obliging as to leave open for my perusal, I find he has requested permission to retire, on account of his age, infirmities, etc. How far his health may be impaired, I know not. The letters I have received from him bear no marks of age, and there is an acuteness and sententious brevity in them which do not indicate an understanding injured by years. I have many reasons to think our country much indebted to him, and I confess it would mortify my pride as an American if his constituents should be the only people to whom his character is known, that should deny his merit and services the testimony given them by other nations. Justice demands of me to assure you that his reputation and respectability are acknowledged and have weight here, and that I have received from him all that uniform attention and aid which was due to the importance of the affairs committed to me.

"The affectionate mention he makes of his only descendant, on whom the support of his name and family will devolve, is extremely amiable, and flows in a delicate manner from that virtuous sensibility, by which nature kindly extends the benefits of parental affection to a period beyond the limits of our lives. This is an affecting subject, and minds susceptible of the finer sensations are insensibly led at least to wish that the feelings of an ancient patriot, going in the evening of a long life really devoted to the public, to enjoy repose in the bosom of philosophic retirement, may be gratified by seeing some little sparks of the affection of his country rest on the only support of his age and hope of his family. Such are the effusions of my heart on this occasion, and I pour them into yours from a persuasion that they will meet with a hospitable reception from congenial emotions."

In reply to Colonel Lauren's letter, Dr. Franklin said: "I received your very kind letter written at sea, off the coast of Spain. I thank you for the friendly hint contained in it respecting my grandson; I see that what you propose for him might have a good effect, but I have too much occasion for his assistance, and cannot spare him to make the voyage. He must take his chance, and I hope he will in time obtain, as well as merit, the consideration of our government."—Passy, November 8, 1781.

cover the copy of a letter I have just received from the minister, relative to the disposition of the late loans; by which will be seen the situation I am in with respect to my acceptances of the quantities of bills drawn by Congress on Mr. Jay, Mr. Laurens, Mr. Adams, and myself; which I entered into in the expectation, which both Colonel Laurens and myself entertained, that a part of these loans might be applied to the payment of these bills, but which I am now told cannot be done without an express order from Congress.

I shall endeavor to change the sentiments of the court in this respect, but I am not sure of succeeding. I must therefore request that a resolution of Congress may immediately be sent, empowering me to apply as much of those loans as shall be necessary for the discharge of all such drafts of Congress, or for the repayment of such sums as I may in the meantime be obliged to borrow for the discharge of those drafts. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXIII

TO JOHN ADAMS

Passy, 11 June, 1781.

Sir:—Mr. Grand has communicated to me a letter from your Excellency to him, relating to certain charges in your account, on which you seem to desire to have my opinion. As we are all new in these matters, I consulted, when I was making up my ac-

count, one of the oldest foreign ministers here as to the custom in such cases. He informed me that it was not perfectly uniform with the ministers of all courts, but that in general, where a salary was given for service and expenses, the expenses understood were merely those necessary to the man, such as housekeeping, clothing, and coach; but that the rent of the hotel in which he dwelt, the payment of couriers, the postage of letters, the salary of clerks, the stationery for his bureau, with the feasts and illuminations made on public occasions, were esteemed the expenses of the prince or state that appointed him, being for the service or honor of his prince or nation, and either entirely, or in great part, expenses that, as a private man, he would have been under no necessity of incurring. These, therefore, were to be charged in his accounts. He remarked, it was true, that the minister's housekeeping, as well as his house, was usually, and in some sort necessarily, more expensive than that of a private person; but this, he said, was considered in his salary to avoid trouble in accounts; but that, where the prince or state had not purchased or built a house for their minister, which was sometimes the case, they always paid his house rent.

I have stated my own accounts according to this information; and I mention them, that, if they seem to you reasonable, we may be uniform in our charges, by your charging in the same manner; or, if objections to any of them occur to you, that you would communicate them to me for the same reason.

Thus you see my opinion that the articles you

mention, of *courtage*, *commission*, and *port de lettres*, are expenses that ought to be borne, not by you, but by the United States. Yet it seems to me more proper, that you should pay them and charge them with the other articles above mentioned, than that they should be paid by me, who, not knowing the circumstances, cannot judge (as you can) of the truth and justice of such an account when presented, and who, besides, have no orders to pay more on your account than your net salary.

With regard to that salary, though your receipts to Fizeau & Grand, shown to me, might be quite sufficient to prove they had paid you the sums therein mentioned, yet, as there are vouchers for them, and which they have a right to retain, I imagine it will be clearest if you draw upon me, agreeably to the order of Congress; and, if this is quarterly, it will be the most convenient to me. With great respect, I have the honor, etc.,

B. Franklin.[1]

DCCCCLXXIV

FROM SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Philadelphia, 19 June, 1781.

Sir:—You will receive, herewith enclosed, a letter addressed to his most Christian Majesty, with a copy of the same for your information; also a commission constituting yourself, with the four other gentlemen therein named, our ministers for negotiating a peace;

[1] For Mr. Adams's answer see the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. III., p. 238.

also, another commission and duplicate authorizing the same ministers to accept of the mediation of the Emperor of Germany and Empress of Russia, in one of which the Emperor is first named, and, in the other, the Empress, to be made use of as circumstances shall render it expedient.[1]

I have also herewith enclosed instructions for your government, in addition to those formerly given to Mr. Adams for negotiating peace. A letter, in answer to yours of the 12th of March last, will also accompany this. You will please to communicate immediately to Mr. Adams and Mr. Jay the receipt of these important despatches.

Mr. Secretary Thomson desires you would be so good as to send him the machine, with proper directions, to be used for striking copies of letters, as mentioned in yours of the 12th of March. For want of time I must refer you to Mr. Lovell's despatches for American intelligence in general. I have the honor to be, etc., SAMUEL HUNTINGTON,

President of Congress.

DCCCCLXXV

TO WILLIAM JACKSON [2]

PASSY, 28 June, 1781.

SIR:—Since my acceptance of your bills, I have applied to the ministry for more money to discharge

[1] See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. X., pp. 71–76.

[2] Mr. Jackson was aide-de-camp to General Lincoln, and accompanied Colonel Laurens to France. When Colonel Laurens left Paris, to return to America, he sent Mr. Jackson to Holland, with instructions to superintend the shipment of money and goods on public account in the frigate *South Carolina*, commanded by Commodore Gillon.

the other engagements I entered into for payment of the Congress bills drawn on Holland and Spain. I find so much difficulty and even impossibility of obtaining it at this time, that I am under the absolute necessity of stopping the cash that is in Holland, or of ruining all the credit of the States in Europe, and even in America, by stopping payment.

This is, therefore, to order that, in case the said cash has been delivered to you by Messrs. Fizeau & Grand, you would immediately return it into their hands to remain there at my disposal. I am sorry that this operation is necessary, but it must be done, or the consequences will be terrible. I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXVI

TO DAVID HARTLEY

Passy, 30 June, 1781.

I received my dear friend's kind letter of the 15th instant, and immediately communicated your request of a passport to the Count de Vergennes. His answer, which I have but just received, expresses an opinion that the circumstance of his granting a passport to you, as you mention the purpose of your coming to be the discoursing with me on the subject of peace, might, considering your character, occasion many inconvenient reports and speculations; but that he would make no difficulty of giving it, if you assured me that you were authorized for such purpose by your ministry, which he does not think at all

likely; otherwise, he judges it best that I should not encourage your coming.

Thus it seems I cannot have at present the pleasure you were so kind as to propose for me. I can only join with you in earnest wishes for peace, a blessing which I shall hardly live to see. With the greatest esteem and respect, I am ever, dear sir,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXVII

TO WILLIAM JACKSON

Passy, 5 July, at 6 in the morning, 1781.

Sir:—I have this instant received your letter of the 2d, urging the delivery of the money. I must be short in my reply, as your express waits.

Colonel Laurens, indeed, obtained a promise of ten millions, to be raised by a loan in Holland. I understood, while he was here, that that loan was in train, and that the million and a half to be sent with you was a part of it. I since learn that nothing has yet been obtained in Holland, that the success is not yet certain, and that the money in question is a part of the six millions I had obtained before his arrival, upon the strength of which I accepted the bills drawn on his father and on Mr. Jay, and without which acceptances the Congress' credit in America would have been ruined, and a loss incurred of twenty per cent. upon the protests. I cannot obtain more money here at present; and those bills, being accepted, must be paid, as well as those I accepted,

on your earnest request, for the great unexpected purchase you made in Holland.

Colonel Laurens has carried two million and a half of that six millions with him, which will serve till the loan in Holland produces a further supply. In the meantime, I cannot suffer the credit of our country to be destroyed, if, by detaining this money, it may be saved. And if I were to consent to its going, our banker would be obliged to arrest great part of it as belonging to the States, he being in advance for them, which would occasion much disagreeable noise, and very ill consequences to our credit in Europe.

I find by Mr. Viemerange's account just received, that Mr. Laurens' orders have more than absorbed all the money he did not take with him. I applaud the zeal you have both shown in the affair; but I see that nobody cares how much I am distressed, provided they can carry their own points. I must, therefore, take what care I can of mine, theirs and mine being equally intended for the service of the public. I am sorry to learn that the vessel is detained for this express. I understood by your last that she waited for convoy. I heartily wish you a good voyage, and am, with great esteem, etc.,

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXVIII

TO WILLIAM JACKSON

Passy, 5 July, 1781.

Sir:—I received your letter of the 2d instant, by your first express, this morning at six; answered it,

and sent him away immediately. I have just now received your second express, of the same date, in which you threaten me with a proceeding, that I apprehend exceedingly imprudent, as it can answer no good end to you, must occasion much scandal, and be thereby very prejudicial to the affairs of the Congress.

But I cannot, therefore, consent to suffer their bills, to the amount of more than a million accepted and expected, to go back protested for want of this money. I have nothing to change in the answer above mentioned. You will, however, follow your own judgment, as I must follow mine; and you will take upon yourself the consequences. I have the honor to be, etc., B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXIX

TO WILLIAM JACKSON

Passy, 6 July, 1781.

Sir:—I received and answered two of your expresses yesterday morning, and in the evening I received a third letter from you, all dated the 2d instant.

In this last you tell me "that I must be sensible I cannot have the disposal of the money, as it was obtained, without either my knowledge or concurrence, by Colonel Laurens, appointed special minister for that purpose." I do not desire to diminish the merit of Colonel Laurens. I believe he would have been glad, if it had been in his power, to have procured ten

times the sum; and that no application or industry on his part for that purpose would have been wanting. But I cannot let this injurious assertion of yours pass, without expressing my surprise that you, who were always with that gentleman, should be so totally ignorant of that transaction. The six millions, of which he took with him two and a half, of which one and a half were sent to Holland, and of which more than the remainder is ordered in stores from hence, was a *free gift* from the king's goodness (not a *loan* to be *repaid with interest*), and was obtained by *my application*, long before Colonel Laurens' arrival.

I had also given in a list of the stores to be provided, though on his coming I cheerfully gave up the further prosecution of that business into his hands, as he was better acquainted with the particular wants of the army than I could be, and it was one of the purposes of his appointment.

Thus no part of the affair was done without my "*knowledge and concurrence*," except the sending a million and a half of the specie to Holland. This was indeed a secret to me. I had heard of that sum's being ready there to embark, but I always, till lately, understood it to be a part of the Dutch loan, which I am about to mention, or I should certainly have opposed that operation. What Colonel Laurens really obtained, and a great service I hope it will prove, was a loan upon interest of ten millions, to be borrowed on the credit of this court in Holland. I have not heard that this loan has yet produced any thing, and therefore I do not know that a single

livre exists, or has existed in Europe, of his procuring for the States. On the contrary, he and you have drawn from me considerable sums, as necessary for your expenses, and he left me near forty thousand livres to pay for the *Alliance;* and, moreover, engaged me in a debt in Holland, which I understood might amount to about fifteen thousand pounds sterling, and which you contrived to make fifty thousand pounds.

When I mentioned to him the difficulty I should find to pay the drafts, he said: "You have the remainder of the six millions," He gave me no account of the dispositions he had made, and it is but lately I have learnt that there is no remainder. To gratify you, and to get that ship out, which could not have stirred without me, I have engaged for the vast sum above mentioned, which I am sure I shall be much distressed to pay, and therefore have not deserved at your hands the affront you are advised to menace me with.

And, since I find you make it a point of reflection upon me, that I want to apply money to the payment of my engagements for the Congress, which was obtained by Colonel Laurens for other purposes, I must request that you will upon this better information take occasion to correct that error, if you have communicated it to any other person.

By the letters you showed me that had passed between Mr. Adams and you, I perceived he had imbibed an opinion that Colonel Laurens had, as he expressed it, done more for the United States in the short time of his being in Europe, than all the rest of

their diplomatic corps put together. I should never have disputed this, because I had rather lend a little credit to a friend than to take any from him, especially when I am persuaded he will make a good use of it; but, when his friends will make such supposititious credit a matter of reproach to me, it is not right to continue silent.

As to the safety of your excellent conveyance you mention, I must own I have some doubts about it, and I fear I shall hear of the arrival of that ship in England before she sees America. Be that as it may, I am clear that no use can possibly be made of the money in America for supporting the credit of the States, equal in any degree to the effect it must have for the same purpose, when applied to the payment of their bills here, which must otherwise go back protested. And I am sure it will be exceedingly prejudicial to their credit if, by the rash proceeding you threaten, this situation of their affairs becomes the subject of public talk and discussion in Europe. I am, etc., B. Franklin.

P. S.—I request you would read again, and consider well, my first letter to you on this subject. The reasons therein contained subsist still in their full force.[1]

[1] Mr. Jackson afterwards had reason to be entirely satisfied with the course pursued by Dr. Franklin on this occasion. He sailed from Amsterdam with Commodore Gillon, who, after cruising four weeks in the North Sea and near the English channel, put into Coruña. From that port Mr. Jackson wrote to Dr. Franklin as follows:

"I am sorry to inform you that the event has verified your prediction in every particular. Mr. Gillon has violated his contract with Colonel Laurens in every instance. I beg leave to present you my most sincere and cordial thanks, as well for myself as my country,

DCCCCLXXX

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES [1]

PASSY, 6 July, 1781.

It seems to have been insinuated, either through mistake or ill will to the United States:

1. That their merchants have combined to depreciate the bills drawn on France.

2. That their trade with England is as great as before the war.

for your disposition of the money which was to have been embarked on board this vessel, the event having fatally confirmed your opinion of this man. I conceive my country indebted to your prudence for the preservation of her property, as I do myself for my freedom at this instant; for, I am assured, had not your precaution prevented the embarkation, I should at this hour have been a prisoner; I need not say where."—Coruña, September 26, 1781.

It would seem that there were personal differences between Commodore Gillon, Mr. Jackson, and some of the other passengers. Gillon complained of Mr. Jackson's conduct in letters to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams, from which it is obvious that the above expressions of discontent on the part of Mr. Jackson are to be received with considerable modification, as dictated more by feeling than by a calm and impartial view of the case. Commodore Gillon said that he had been detained long on the coast by contrary winds, and came to Coruña for a supply of provisions, as he had not enough remaining, in consequence of this detention, to enable him to cross the Atlantic. There were five hundred and fifty men on board. Three hundred of these were marines, who were called *Volontaires de Luxembourg*, and whom he had engaged, by the king's permission, in France, for the State of South Carolina. They were to serve three years. Dr. Waterhouse, who was a passenger on board the vessel, had a favorable opinion of the Commodore, as appears by a letter he wrote from Coruña to Mr. Adams. He thought the difficulties were chiefly to be ascribed to Mr. Jackson, and one or two other passengers, who took offence without a just cause; and he has since written, in relation to this affair: "I had, and always shall have, a high degree of respect for Commodore Gillon, as an able and honorable man."—EDITOR.

[1] In a memorandum, Dr. Franklin says: "The following paper was delivered to M. de Rayneval, to be by him communicated to Count de Vergennes, in order to correct some wrong ideas of that minister."

I have known two instances wherein bills of exchange on England have fallen more than fifteen per cent. lower than the present price of bills on France.

The first was in 1739, when an expedition being projected against Carthagena, the government of England ordered three thousand men to be raised in America, and transports with provisions to be furnished, for the amount of which expense bills were ordered to be drawn on the treasury at London. This adventitious quantity of bills coming into market, and being more than the common course of the commerce required, occasioned the lowering of their price forty-two and a half per cent. below the rate before accustomed.

The like happened a few years after, when, on a prospect of short crops of corn in Europe, orders were received in America to purchase and send over vast quantities, and to draw bills and sell them in the country in order to raise money for the purchase. This sudden addition to the quantity of bills produced a fall of forty per cent. in their price. And this must always happen in some proportion when the quantity of any article *in commerce* exceeds the present demand.

And when it is considered that the merchants of America are numerous, and dispersed through thirteen different provinces, at great distances from each other, such a combination will appear as improbable as that the farmers in France should combine to raise the price of wheat.

With regard to the English commerce, there is none certainly but what is contraband, and there can

be no temptation to such contraband, but for particular commodities that are cheaper there than in France. The quantity therefore cannot be great. Such contraband is found difficult to prevent in all countries. It is carried on at this time between France and England. But there are many commodities much cheaper in France, such as wines, silks, oil, modes, etc., which will be of great consumption in America, and when correspondences are once settled, and the people there become acquainted with the manufactures of France, the demand for them will increase; these manufactures will of course be improved in goodness and cheapness, and the trade continue to augment accordingly.

It is difficult to change suddenly the whole current of connections, correspondences, and confidences that subsist between merchants, and carry them all into a new channel; but time and a continuance of friendship will make great alterations.

B. Franklin.

DCCCCLXXXI

TO WILLIAM JACKSON

Passy, 10 July, 1781.

Sir:—Last night I received your fourth letter on the same subject. You are anxious to carry the money with you, because it will reanimate the credit of America. My situation and long acquaintance with the affairs relating to the public credit enable me, I think, to judge better than you can do, who are a novice in them, what employment of it will most

conduce to that end; and I imagine the retaining it to pay the Congress drafts has infinitely the advantage. You repeat that the ship is detained by my refusal. You forget your having written to me expressly, that she waited for my convoy. You remind me of the great expense the detention of the ship occasions. Who has given orders to stop her? It was not me. I had no authority to do it. Have you? And do you imagine, if you have taken such authority upon you, that the Congress ought to bear the expense occasioned by your imprudence? and that the blame of detaining the necessary stores the ship contains will be excused by your fond desire of carrying the money? The noise you have rashly made about this matter, contrary to the advice of Mr. Adams, which you asked and received, and which was to comply with my requisition, has already done great mischief to our credit in Holland. Messrs. Fizeaux have declared they will advance to him no more money on his bills upon me to assist in paying the Congress drafts on him. Your Commodore, too, complains, in a letter I have seen, that he finds it difficult to get money for my acceptances of your drafts in order to clear his ship, though before this proceeding of yours bills on me were, as Mr. Adams assures me, in as good credit on the exchange of Amsterdam as those of any banker in Europe. I suppose the difficulty mentioned by the Commodore is the true reason of the ship's stay, if in fact the convoy is gone without her. Credit is a delicate thing, capable of being blasted with a breath. The public talk you have occasioned about my stopping the

money, and the conjectures of the reasons or necessity of doing it, have created doubts and suspicions of most pernicious consequences. It is a matter that should have passed in silence. You repeat as a reason for your conduct, that the money was obtained by the great exertions of Colonel Laurens. Who obtained the grant is a matter of no importance, though the use I propose to make of it is of the greatest. But the fact is not as you state it. I obtained it before he came. And if he were here I am sure I could convince him of the necessity of leaving it, especially after I should have informed him that you had made in Holland the enormous purchase of £40,000 sterling's worth of goods over and above the £10,000 worth, which I had agreed should be purchased by him on my credit, and that you had induced me to engage for the payment of your purchase by showing me a paper said to contain his order for making it, which I then took to be his handwriting, though I afterwards found it to be yours, and not signed by him. It would be additional reason with him when I should remind him that he himself, to induce me to come into the proposal of Commodore Gillon and the rest of the Holland transaction, to which I was averse, assured me he had mentioned it to the minister, and that it was approved of. That, on the contrary, I find the minister remembers nothing of it, very much dislikes it, and absolutely refuses to furnish any money to discharge that amount. You finish your letter by telling me that "the daily enhancement of expense to the United States from these difficulties is worthy

the attention of those whose *duty* it is to economize the public money, and to whom the commonweal is entrusted without deranging the special department of another." The ship's lying there with 500 or 600 men on board is undoubtedly a great daily expense, but it is you that occasion it; and the superior airs you give yourself, young gentleman, of reproof to me, and reminding me of my duty, do not become you, whose special department and employ in public affairs, of which you are so vain, is but of yesterday, and would never have existed but by my concurrence, and would have ended in disgrace if I had not supported your enormous purchases by accepting your drafts. The charging me with want of economy is particularly improper in you, when the only instance you know of it is my having indiscreetly complied with your demand in advancing you 120 louis for the expense of your journeys to Paris, and when the only instance I know of your economizing money is your sending me three expresses, one after another, on the same day, all the way from Holland to Paris, each with a letter saying the same thing to the same purpose. This dispute is as useless as it is unpleasant. It can only create ill blood. Pray let us end it. I have the honor to be, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

DCCCCLXXXII

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

PASSY 11 July, 1781.

SIR:—The number of Congress bills that have been drawn on the ministers in Spain and Holland, which

I am by my acceptances obliged to pay, as well as those drawn upon myself, the extreme importance of supporting the credit of Congress, which would be disgraced in a political as well as a pecuniary light, through all the courts of Europe, if those bills should go back protested, and the unexpected delays arising with regard to the intended loan in Holland,—all those considerations have compelled me to stop the one million five hundred thousand livres, which were to have been sent by way of Amsterdam. As soon as more money can be furnished to me by this court, I shall take care to replace that sum, and forward with it as great an addition as possible. I am now soliciting supplies of clothing, arms, ammunition, etc., to replace what has been unfortunately lost in the *Marquis de Lafayette*, and hope to succeed.

Captain Jackson, who is truly zealous for the service, has been exceedingly solicitous and earnest with me to induce me to permit the money to go in this ship; but, for the reasons above mentioned, I find it absolutely necessary to retain it for the present, which I doubt not will be approved by Congress. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. Franklin.

END OF VOLUME VIII